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# MILITARY ILLUSTRATED

## PAST & PRESENT

No. 14

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AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1988



Our cover illustration shows a reconstruction of a Royal Signals sergeant with a motorcyclist of US 4th Arm'd Div., 1944 — see p. 39

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# EDITORIAL

Our contribution to the 400th anniversary of our preservation from the Spanish Armada is an article on the organisation and equipment of the units which would have defended the capital had Parma's *tercios* landed: the London Trained Bands. It is the work of John Tincey; born in 1954, John is a history graduate of Lancaster University who currently holds a government job at Heathrow Airport. He pursues his interest in 16th and 17th century subjects, however; he is the author of three books, and a keen 'black powder' shot.

We only just received in time the 'mug shot' of Martin Pegler, another first-time contributor — he returned only days before we went to press from four months spent meandering across the emptier bits of the USA in a temperamental camper van. His article on the Vickers combines his twin passions as a researcher and collector: firearms, and the Great War. Martin, also born in 1954, is a London University history graduate and a contributor to various journals, who is currently seeking a post in the museum field.

The research historian for a new Western heritage museum in Los Angeles, after many years in similar senior posts with US Army and Wyoming state museums, Dr. John P. Langellier is a graduate of the University of San Diego and a



John Tincey



Martin Pegler



John P. Langellier

Kansas State University Ph.D. He is the author of numerous publications related to the Old West.

## Dollar prices

Since our first issue more than two years ago we have managed to keep subscription prices stable; but that period has seen the value of the US

dollar fall by more than 25 per cent against the pound. We fear we can no longer avoid raising prices for those customers who deal direct with our London address in dollars. From this issue onwards the US dollar price for a year's subscription is \$40.00; for two years, \$68.00; for a single back-number, \$5.50; and for a binder, \$11.00. A year's subscription to the French monthly magazines *Militaria* and *Tradition* is now \$65.00 per title; and a single back-number of either, \$6.00. Please note that these rates include airmail postage; and that they apply to payments in dollars only — sterling rates are unchanged.

## Manchester Regiment

We are asked to announce that a new museum devoted to the Regular, Territorial and Militia battalions of this regiment, 1758-1958, has been opened in the Town Hall, Ashton-under-Lyne, and is open daily except for Sundays and Bank Holidays.

## Errata

We offer our sincere apologies for the transposition of 1987 for 1988 details in the advertisement for the London Arms Fair in 'MI' No.12. We also apologise for the omission of credit to Ian R. Scott, who drew the spearhead drawings on p.26, 'MI' No.13. We would point out that on p.28, 'MI' No.12, a freak colour distortion possibly caused by reaction between dyes and lights has introduced a strong purple cast into the light grey of Plate 2, top row, fourth item, and second row, first item — the true shade is close to top row, third item.

nately the characterisations rely on traditional stereotypes; but some tense action scenes, and beautifully photographed snowscapes, provide some compensation.

Zoltan Korda's *The Four Feathers* (1939) was the fourth but by no means the last version of A.E.W. Mason's classic novel to be filmed. The story concerns Harry Feversham, a young officer in the 'North Surrey Regiment' who resigns his commission on the eve of his regiment's departure for the Sudan in 1882. After three brother officers, and his fiance Ethne, each send him a white feather as a symbol of his supposed cowardice, he sets out for the Sudan to retrieve his reputation. Mason was less concerned with military exploits than with the nature of heroism and unspoken emotion. The scriptwriters jettisoned the subtleties, however, and moved the action forwards to coincide with Kitchener's Omdurman campaign of 1898.

Much of the film was shot on location in the Sudan, and featured many thousands of extras. The spectacle was so successful that footage from the film has since reappeared in several inferior productions, including Korda's 1956 remake *Storm Over the Nile*, and Nathan Juran's *East of Sudan* (1963). John Clements was adequate in the rôle of Feversham, but the acting honours must be awarded to Ralph Richardson as Lt. Durrance, sender of one of the feathers and a rival for Ethne's affections.

Richard Driscoll's low-budget *Silent Heroes* is the first British feature to deal with the Falklands War, and has been released directly on to video. Martin Aylott plays a Times reporter, James Hammond, who conducts an investigation into the conduct of the war a short time after the cessation of hostilities. He interviews John Hardcastle (Robert Wilsford), a badly burned member of the SAS, at his hospital bedside. Hardcastle recalls being air-lifted by helicopter to harass Argentinian units near Stanley, and other actions at Goose Green and Bluff Cove. The interview triggers disturbing memories for both men. Hammond remembers meeting 'the Minister' responsible for the war's conduct in an attempt to obtain more information than was available through daily press briefings. A fellow journalist provides him with classified photographs which reveal the grim nature of the fighting, including the use of napalm. 'The Minister' is shocked by these, and realises that he has been misinformed as much as the public at large. By contrast, Hardcastle finds himself reconsidering his rôle in the war and the effect his training has had on him. In a scene reminiscent of the end of *Apocalypse Now*, Hardcastle encounters a bald Col. Kurtz-like figure representing himself in later life, who forces him to face the truth about what he has become.

Combat sequences shot in Wales are used with documentary footage to convey the fighting in the

## ON THE SCREEN



Germany's progress towards manufacturing an atomic bomb. Richard Harris plays Knut Straud, leader of the group, and Kirk Douglas is cast as Dr. Rolf Pedersen, a scientist who is persuaded to accompany the raid.

After an attempt to land British Commandos by glider fails disastrously, Straud decides to lead his own men into the factory. The saboteurs successfully place charges by the vital electrolysis units, and escape before they detonate. As the Germans repair the damage quickly, a second operation is devised to prevent existing stocks of heavy water being transferred to Germany, the climax of the film being the sinking of the ferry *Hydro* as it transports the heavy water across a lake.

Inevitably, some facts and characters have been distorted to meet the demands of a high-budget war epic. However, the film is still of interest through its use of the original locations and such props as the sister-ship of the *Hydro*. Unfortu-

## Video Releases:

- 'Hamburger Hill' (Vestron: 18)
- 'The Heroes of Telemark' (Video Collection: U)
- 'The Four Feathers' (Central: U)
- 'Silent Heroes — Battle for the Falklands' (ABC Video: 15)
- 'The Death of Adolf Hitler' (GMH Entertainments: PG)

John Irvin's *Hamburger Hill* (1987) was the second of the recent wave of films dealing with the Vietnam War, and is unique in dealing with a single operation that actually occurred. It deals with Operation 'Apache Snow', in which elements of the 101st Abn. Div. were ordered to take Dong Ap Bia, designated Hill 937, in the Ashau Valley in May 1969. The hill was captured at a cost of 70 per cent casualties among the assault troops; and was soon afterwards abandoned once more.

The film begins with the 3rd Squad, 1st Platoon, Bravo Company of an Airborne rifle battalion being airlifted from the Ashau Valley to a rest area after sustaining several casualties. There Sgts. Frantz (Dylan McDermott) and Worcester (Steven Weber) supervise the introduction of replacements who have just arrived 'in-country'. It is a brief respite: the squad soon returns to the Ashau, and their company is ordered to take Hill 937. The rest of the film shows their ordeal as they make repeated assaults on the heavily fortified hill.

Less concerned with the overall strategy than with the experience of one particular squad, played by a largely unknown cast, the film avoids the melodrama which characterised *Platoon*, while still making some pointed comments about racial discrimination, insensitive TV journalists, and uninformed liberal political postures. Indeed, the anti-war movement at home comes in for more criticism than the NVA Regulars firmly entrenched at the top of the hill. The camaraderie of men caught in appalling conditions convinces by those small details which only come from experience: scriptwriter James Carabatos (who also scripted *Heartbreak Ridge*) served with the 1st Air Cavalry in Vietnam, and director John Irvin made a documentary there about combat photography, called *Beautiful People*. The combat sequences are particularly realistic — even to the sound track, which betrays much expert attention to detail — and well convey how Hill 937 attained its grisly nickname.

Anthony Mann's *The Heroes of Telemark* (1965) is based on the raid made by Norwegians to destroy the heavy water unit in the Norsk Hydro factory at Vermark, which was thought to be vital to

# THE AUCTION SCENE

The on-going saga of the Firearm Amendment Bill and the Criminal Justice Bill continues to wend its weary way, with little comfort for the collector. In the case of the Criminal Justice Bill, strong representations to the Home Office have brought the response that it is 'not expected to affect the collector'. If only that were the case! Once the Bill becomes law it is probably only a matter of time before some unfortunate collector runs foul of a suspicious or obstructive policeman, and is charged under the Act for having a bladed weapon in a public place.

At the London Arms Fair which took place at the end of April, and at Pistol 88 at Bisley in May, there were many knives being offered for sale, quite legally at present; but this may well be the last time. It was noticeable that many dealers and other interested parties were adopting a rather head-in-the-sand attitude, claiming that the new law would not really affect them. Others, more realistic, were preparing for the worst.

The museums made strong representations to the Home Office, and they have fared a little better: a clause is to be inserted giving them exemption from the prohibition placed on certain types of knives. They will be able to acquire or purchase such items, and the exemption will cover the vendor for that particular transaction.

Not all is gloom for the collector, however; and for those with the opportunity or the capital the falling dollar is making auctions in the

United States very attractive. Some dealers have been crossing the Atlantic to bring home some very desirable pieces at not quite knock-down prices. (It is ironic that some, at least, will probably be sold back to American collectors at British prices.)

However, it is not necessary to travel to the States to spend at auction, and the last few months have seen a number of good ones nearer home. It is noticeable that interest in arms and armour appears to be growing, and one or two auction houses are developing this side of their business. Bonhams are coming back into the field in strength; and the Prudential Company is expanding from insurance and property into arms and armour auctions. The well-established houses — Sotheby's, Phillips, Christie's, Weller & Dusty and Wallis & Wallis — will find it more difficult to put together good sales in the face of the increased competition.

Sotheby's experimented with their April sale by selling some lots in London and some at Billingshurst in Sussex. The London section included a fine knightly sword dated 1367; and bidding swarmed up to £30,000 in a very short time. In the same sale the shell jacket and shirt of a Louisiana infantryman of c. 1864 realised the astonishing price of £3,600. One of the biggest surprises in this sale came in the first lot — a sword with a Tipu Sahib connection, estimated at £350-£500, sold for £12,500. Armour is still in demand, and a fine pair of Maximilian gauntlets realised £1,700, while two fairly conventional morions went for £1,500 and £1,700.

In the sale in Sussex only just over three per cent remained unsold, and there were some interesting prices for a collection of British Army numbered buttons, with each button averaging out at around £4 to £7; while a Victorian officer's helmet of the North Somerset Yeomanry realised £825. In the edged weapon section a *kılıç* or Turkish sabre made £770, and a *shamshir* £462; British military swords also fared well; and Third Reich daggers of the SA fetched around £90, and of the Kreigsmarine, £231. Painted truncheons continue their steady rise in value, a William IV example achieving £110. One of the top

releases in GMH Entertainments' *Visions of War* documentary series. The play is more of a dramatised documentary than fiction, the fruit of seven years' research by writer-director Rex Firkin. Frank Finlay won the Society of Film and Television Arts Best Actor award in 1973 for his performance, conveying well Hitler's changes of mood through rage, melancholy, humour and sentimentality during the last days in the Berlin bunker.

Stephen J. Greenhill



In Sotheby's Sussex sale of 27 April this Scottish basket-hilted broadsword realised £550. The straight doubled-edged blade, with double narrow fullers, is struck 'Andrea Farara'.

Falklands. However, the film is primarily a comment on the war through its effects on people's lives. Although it does not achieve the significance for which it is obviously striving, it is undoubtedly thought-provoking, and worthy of consideration. Those interested should write to ABC Film (UK) Ltd., 77 Merthyr Rd., Whitchurch, Cardiff CF4 1DD.

*The Death of Adolf Hitler* is a play made by London Weekend Television in 1972, and is among the recent

prices, £935, was realised for a Frankenau five-shot pinfire purse revolver; and the release of rimfire weapons from the restrictions of a Firearm Certificate has pushed prices for Derringer pistols sharply upwards. In this sale one example, a Colt No.1, fetched £176, and a Remington over-and-under, £242. A cased Colt pocket revolver made £1,595.

There was a fine sale of militaria at Christie's South Kensington on 20 May, with two particularly fine headdresses: a 'Waterloo' shako of the Kent militia, and an officer's shako of the Yorkshire Hussars, c. 1840. The Kent militia shako made £3,500, while the more spectacular

later example raised £5,000. At the other end of the headdress market, a RAMC Home Service pattern helmet, post-1901, fetched £170. Shoulder belt plates seem to have steadied in price: one for an officer of the 92nd Gordon Highlanders made only £100, and another for a Scots Fusilier Guard fetched £180.

It was a sad day for the Cavalry Club when they decided that they had to sell their library — but a delight for military bibliophiles. The three-day sale at Sotheby's offered a wide range of manuals and textbooks; prices were, on the whole, above the estimates, but not as high as some dealers had predicted.

Frederick Wilkinson

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# The Vickers Machine Gun, 1914-18



MARTIN PEGLER  
Paintings by PAUL HANNON

More than any other weapon, the machine gun has become synonymous with the mass slaughter of the First World War. In the public imagination the sound of that war is the staccato chatter of the machine gun, echoing across a smoke-wreathed battlefield as lines of men tumble like severed puppets. But what was the reality for the men behind the weapon? Is the idea of the machine gun as the ultimate in automated death a myth attributable to Hollywood: was it, as Haig commented testily, simply an 'over-rated weapon'? How was it actually used; and to what effect?

While this article is 'devoted to the Vickers Machine Gun and its use, much of the information

*Machine gunners attached to the 1st Bn., Leicester Regiment in a captured second-line trench at Ribecourt, 20 November 1917. Numbers of ammunition boxes and water cans are stacked close at hand, and both guns are set up with belts loaded, ready for immediate defensive fire.*

which follows is applicable to the similar Maxim-derived weapons employed by the other major combatant powers. Again, while our timeframe is limited to the First World War, when the tactics that were adopted evolved through experience on the Western Front, they were in many instances to remain unchanged until well after the Second World War.

## The gun

Although this is not intended to be a technical treatise on the mechanical complexities of the Vickers, some description of its evolution and function is warranted.

Originally termed the Vickers-Maxim, the Mk I weapon used during the Great War was a simplified descendant of the original gun designed by Hiram Maxim in 1883. The brass-jacketed Maxim was both heavy and cumbersome, but in a modified form it was adopted by the British Army in 1890 on a scale of one per battalion. (Its use in conjunction with a wheeled carriage and limber severely limited its potential, however.) As a result of experience gained in colonial wars, and the Boer War in particular, the Maxim was redesigned. Under the aegis of the Vickers Company, who had the manufacturing rights, the Vickers Mk I went into production at Crayford, Kent.

Among the modifications were a fluted steel-alloy

jacket, and an inverted toggle mechanism which enabled the trigger to be mounted at the top of the rear casing. The weight was reduced by some 12lb.; and a tripod, the Mk IV, was provided for infantry use, the wheeled carriage being dispensed with.

The mechanism itself remained basically unchanged, being a gas-operated, short-recoil type utilising gases from the muzzle. The toggle joint employed resembles the human leg in operation. With the knee locked, considerable weight can be placed on the foot with no ill effect; bend the knee and the entire assembly — foot, ankle, and leg — will fold up. Thus the locked toggle, as it slid back through recoil, was 'broken' by a cam, causing the joint to fold upwards, sliding back the breech block, ejecting the spent case and chambering a new one in a smooth motion. In function it was identical to the German MG.08, although internal parts were

not interchangeable.

The gun was water-cooled, holding seven pints in the jacket. This boiled after 600 rounds had been fired at half cyclic rate, around 200 rpm, and the boiling water set up convection currents which created a very efficient heat transfer. It also caused evaporation at the rate of one and a half pints per 1,000 rounds. Steam was passed from the jacket, via a tube, into a condenser can, from which it could be returned to the jacket.

Ammunition was supplied in 250-round webbing belts, and a theoretical maximum rate of fire of 550 rpm was possible — although rapid barrel wear would result if this was maintained for any length of time. A good machine gunner would fire in controlled bursts of perhaps 25 rounds: ideally, a rate of about 50 rpm prevented unnecessary mechanical strain or overheating. After 10,000 rounds (in theory, one hour of continuous firing — though a tactical scenario calling for this is hard to imagine) the barrel would require changing.

The original .303 in. Mk VII ball ammunition gave a maximum range of 3,500 yards and a velocity of 2,440 fps; but the streamlined Mk VIIZ introduced in 1916 increased the range by 1,000 yards. The .303 bullet at 200 yards would penetrate 6ft. 8in. of turf, 5ft. of clay, 2ft. 6in. of sand or 1ft. 6in. of oak (respectively, 2.032m; 1.52m; 0.76m; and 0.45m). While the destructive energy of such a bullet was all too well understood by the experienced infantryman, less seasoned observers sometimes made incorrect references to the use of 'explosive' bullets after seeing their effects on the human body. These depend on a large number of more or less random factors; suffice it to say that with the large-calibre, high-velocity ammunition of that period, they could sometimes be gruesome.

## TRAINING AND ORGANISATION

If the British high command were dismissive of the machine gun at the outset of the war, their attitude underwent a radical change following the costly assaults of 1914-15, when German machine gunners exacted a high price for the very limited gains of Loos and Festubert. On the morning of the second day of the Loos battle, a 12-battalion attack comprising 10,000 troops was reduced to 1,754 officers and men by German machine guns.

From 14 October 1915 the battalion machine gunners were gradually withdrawn from their parent regiments and formed into the Machine Gun Corps. Its training centre was moved from Bisley in Surrey to Harrowby Camp, Grantham. Training was arduous, as Pte. Arthur Russell of 98th Coy. MGC recalled:

'From 8.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. the parade ground resounded to the sharp commands ... "Mount Gun, Fire, Fall Out, Dismount". For hours at a stretch we

would run for a distance of 25 to 50 yards with a 48lb. tripod, 38lb. gun and boxes containing belts of ammunition weighing 21lb. each. At the command "Cease Fire and Out of Action" we would dismount the gun and double back to our start line. All orders were carried out at the double and...all our movements timed with a stop-watch'.

A Machine Gun Company consisted of about a hundred men divided into four sections, each armed with four guns. In theory, each section comprised an officer, who selected sites and targets; a sergeant, to assume command in the absence of the officer; a corporal, responsible for the packing and contents of the gun limbers carrying parts, ammunition and belt-filling machines; and six Other Ranks per gun, whose section number determined their tasks. No.1 carried the tripod, and fired the weapon; No.2 carried the gun, mounted it prior to action, and ensured smooth feeding of the ammunition. Nos.3 and 4 were ammunition carriers, as well as being

responsible for water supplies and spares. No.5 was section scout or runner; and No.6 was the range taker and 'odd bod'. All the section members were fully trained in the firing of the Vickers; and in practice, under trench conditions, such rigid demarcation seldom occurred.

## THE VICKERS IN USE

The Vickers machine gun was an expensive and complex piece of machinery. In 1915 it cost £210 per weapon to manufacture, each gun comprising over 130 parts, each of which was machined to extremely fine tolerances out of high-grade steels. A recent assessment by a professional engineer of the manufacturing cost of such a weapon at today's prices was in the region of £3,500, allowing for certain parts such as lock and feed block to be cast instead of machined from a solid billet of steel.

Accusations that it was too complex for the conditions of the First World War are not borne out by the facts. Machine gun crews served in every theatre of war from Gallipoli to Russia, from France to Mesopotamia, and the weapon continued to function in a wide variety of climatic conditions.

Despite its internal complexity and demanding maintenance (the balancing of the fusee spring, and the packing of a barrel with asbestos string, were only two of the delicate and complicated maintenance tasks; and even learning stoppage drills expertly could take months of instruction and practice), the gun is simple enough to bring into operation.



Interesting portrait of an MGC (Infantry) lance-corporal, 1917. Note 'I/MGC' shoulder titles: saltire badge just visible, seen in upper sleeve — possibly 24th Division sign, but many MG Cos. also used saltire shapes, 'criss-cross' weave of rank chevrons; brass machine gunner's proficiency badge, good conduct chevron, and wound stripe. The buttons bear the same device as the cap badge.



*Group of long-service machine gunners photographed in summer 1918. The Mk I Vickers is a variant with smooth jacket casing and conical muzzle cap. This excellent view of the Mk IVB tripod should be compared with the early Mk IV in our colour photographs; note the much reduced size of the traversing ring.*

To load and fire, the brass tag of the belt is inserted from the right hand side into the feed block, and the cocking handle is pulled once while the tag is pulled sharply through the feed block. This grips cartridge No.1 at the top of the extractor. The crank is then pulled and released a second time; this withdraws the cartridge from the belt and drops it into the chamber. The gun is now cocked and ready to fire.

The gunner sits behind the weapon, with knees drawn up to allow his elbows to rest

on his thighs, and grips the 'spade' handles with both hands, as illustrated in accompanying photographs. This enables the spring-loaded safety catch bar to be raised clear of the trigger by the second fingers. (The forefingers are curled around the top of the spade handles, out of the way of the second fingers; on those rare occasions when a 'swinging traverse' was used, usually at close quarters and as a last resort, the forefingers helped guide the traverse.) The gun is fired by thumb pressure on the trigger.

Firing a machine gun of the Vickers type is an interesting experience. It can be likened to hanging on to a pneumatic drill or 'jack-hammer', while the nose is assaulted by cordite and oil fumes, and the ears are deafened by the numbing

clatter of the report. For all that, it is an undeniably exhilarating experience.

Traverse is governed by a clamp located at the front upper part of the tripod; this could be locked tight, left free for a swinging traverse, or — normally — clamped loosely enough to allow the gun and the tripod crosshead to be 'tapped' right or left by striking the spade handle a couple of sharp blows with the palm of the hand. This produced a series of 'overlapping' bursts of fire, creating a beaten zone at the receiving end.

Loading and cocking can be completed in a few seconds once the weapon is mounted; a skilled crew could mount, load, lay, aim and fire the Vickers in 30 seconds from scratch. When in the line, and under circumstances dictating a

possible need for rapid deployment, the gun was often left mounted, half-cocked and camouflaged.

#### In the trenches

Unlike an infantry battalion, which did a regular turn of trench duty — usually six days in the front line, six days in reserve and a period of 'rest' — machine gunners tended to occupy static positions, with crews taking a 'twelve days in, four days out' rota. Guns would be spread along a battalion frontage (often in the support line, or between the front and support lines), with the crews occupying dugouts close to their weapon.

The comparatively static nature of the machine gunners' life in the trenches had its advantages: reasonably comfortable dugouts could often be constructed, and

efficient scrapping could procure timber, coal and extra rations. To some extent this was a necessity since, unlike an infantry battalion, a machine gun section might not be in constant contact with its HQ, and deliveries of rations and other supplies could be erratic. A resident crew of a corporal or lance-corporal and four or five others, only one or two of whom would man the gun at any one time, would be visited by their sergeant and officer whenever possible, but these visits depended upon circumstances. Crews were not expected to undertake trench fatigues or any of the other hated and usually nocturnal activities which plagued the infantryman in the line.

The main disadvantage of this static existence was that once its position was registered by the enemy, a machine gun post could expect to be the target of all sorts of unpleasant missiles during the daytime. Daytime fire was often impossible, except when actually under infantry attack. Machine gun crews might theoretically enjoy a unique opportunity to relieve the frustration of enduring hostile fire without being able to retaliate; but the MGC soon earned the nickname of 'The Suicide Club' by the attention their positions attracted from enemy artillery, trench mortars and snipers. For every gunner engaged in harassing fire who might be exhorted by passing infantrymen to 'Give Jerry one for me, chum!', there were a dozen who were urged to consider the advantages of sex and travel by Tommies all too aware that machine guns (like mortars) drew rapid counter-fire.

The gun would not necessarily be left mounted, but the tripod would be left *in situ*, well weighted with sandbags and camouflaged as carefully as possible. The great strength of the Vickers, in contrast to the Lewis gun or to simple musketry, was that it could be set up in advance for fire tasks on fixed lines. Targets could be



#### **Left:**

*Loading the Vickers. The gun is at halfcock, the gunner in the act of cranking the cocking handle a second time to chamber a cartridge.*

#### **Below left:**

*The correct grip for firing the Vickers. The forefingers are curled out of the way, round the tops of the spade handles; the second fingers rest behind the sprung safety bar, ready to lift it out of the way; the thumbs rest on the trigger. Although it looks somewhat contrived, this is in fact a comfortable arrangement.*

#### **Below centre:**

*The side cover removed to show the fusee spring; immensely powerful, this forces the toggle assembly forward again after recoil has blown it backwards. Disconnection of the spring before removal of the breech block is a wise move. As the author has found to his cost, if the cocking handle is released for an instant the entire action slams shut, threatening traumatic amputation of unwary fingers.*

#### **Bottom:**

*Forward top cover opened to show feed block mechanism.*



registered during the day by reading off the direction markings on the right of the tripod's traverse ring, and the graduations on the elevating wheel beneath the rear of the crosshead. By night, or in fog or smoke, the gun could be mounted and laid 'blind', and effective fire brought to bear out to all ranges. The forward edge of the wire entanglement could be set up on a bearing from a machine gun position, so that the gun could enfilade troops as they encountered the wire; and gaps left in the wire for patrols could also be covered the same way.

#### **Tactics**

Machine gun tactics came full circle during the Great War. Prior to 1914 there had been a tendency to use the machine gun as an arm of the artillery, usually with disastrous consequences as machine gun crews were shelled out of existence. Even in 1914 many senior officers were still dismissive of the potential of the weapon. The gradual acceptance of the machine gun by the British high command was due in no small part to the efforts of Lt.Col.

**Top left:**

'No. 1's' view over barrel of gun sited in support trench to enfilade a section of British wire in front of front-line trench (A).

**Top right:**

Plan view of position in lower illustration. (A) Wire; (B) parapet, (C) parados; (D) fire-step; (E) dug-out, under parapet; (F) MG position, cut into forward edge of trench; (G) embrasure.

**Bottom:**

Vickers MG position in a support trench, sited to enfilade wire in front line as at top left, as well as for other tasks within its arc and range. (A) to (G) key as illustration top right. Note wet sandbags laid in embrasure at (G) to reduce effects of muzzle-blast, helping to conceal position. (H) Case, spare parts and tools, carried by No. 1. (J) Range card recording ranges, elevation and bearings to registered fire tasks — ranges taken by Barr & Stroud rangefinder. (K) MG spare parts bag for cleaning materials and rod.

The gun, with three boxes of belts and a condenser can, is shown on a Mk IV tripod with the Mounting, Overbank, MG, Mk I, the tripod legs secured by full sandbags. This mounting allowed the gun to be swung forward and upward from the position shown when firing, thus clearing the embrasure parapet, and to be retracted afterwards. The line of the barrel when firing is indicated by the dotted line.

N. McMahon, Chief Instructor at the School of Infantry, Hythe. His lectures on Fire Tactics and the use of the Vickers-Maxim were so impressive that they were incorporated into Army training manuals. Nevertheless, in 1914 a battalion was equipped with only two weapons, usually situated in the front line defences to provide fire in the face of direct assault.

The *Machine Gunner's Handbook* of 1915 illustrates contemporary attitudes all too clearly: it states, in bold type, that 'The machine gun is a weapon of opportunity, particularly adapted for surprise effect but not for sustained fire action'. By the end of 1915 this was obviously no longer the case: German mastery of machine gun tactics, especially of enfilade and long-range harassing fire, had convinced both line and staff officers of the need to widen the rôle of the machine gun.

Prior to the 1916 Somme



offensive Vickers teams began to be employed to provide high elevation barrages fire to supplement the artillery's 'softening up' process behind German lines. With the new MK VIIIZ streamlined bullet, crews could place fire more than twice as far out as the sighted maximum range of 2,000 yards. At these long ranges, before the appearance of the Second World War dial sight, accuracy would depend either on direct

observation of strike, or a clinometer; and given that the MK VII round rose 711ft. above the line of sight at a range of 2,800 yards, and descended at an angle of 26 degrees, it is clear that claims of accuracy in this sort of firing have sometimes been exaggerated.

The practical value of such fire cannot be established; but Private Dietrich Haase of the 10th Wurttemburg Regiment, for one, was not keen on the experience: 'We were

on a carrying party well behind our lines, about 4km. The whole time we had bullets dropping around us from the British machine guns. They had the roads taped, and we lost two killed and four wounded out of a party of 20. We hated those guns'. (Ironically, Pte. Haase was carrying machine gun ammunition up to the line at the time.)

The crews providing such sustained harassing fire were scarcely popular on either

side of the lines, for obvious reasons. The experience of Sgt. Barton of 132nd MG Coy. was not untypical. Dug in near La Boisselle, his team was ordered to provide 18,000 rounds of indirect fire to enfilade the ground between German front and support lines. 'We had been spotted by Jerry's artillery, and we were being peppered by whizz-bangs. One close one severed the rivets holding the fusée spring cover, so the No.2 held it in place with his hand. We fired as fast as we could, and when the ammo was gone we abandoned the post at the double. Ten minutes later it was utterly destroyed by a 5.9in. [shell].'

The return to a semi-artillery rôle for the machine gun was by no means universal, of course. During the Somme battles MGC (Infantry) crews accompanied attacking troops to provide close range barrage fire. The first recorded instance was on 24 August 1916, when the 19th and 100th MG Cos. provided close covering fire for troops attacking High Wood. One lesson to emerge — often quoted since it was recorded by Lt.Col. G.S. Hutchinson, then the captain commanding 100th Coy. in 33rd Division — was confirmation of the reliability of the Vickers. During 12 hours of continuous firing, ten guns fired 999,750 rounds between them; one gun alone

fired 120,000 rounds. There were no malfunctions apart from the occasional faulty cartridge. There is no reason to doubt that many other units achieved similar records.

### STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Opinion as to the efficiency of the Vickers gun varies with the source consulted and the particular definition of efficiency. (For all practical purposes, the many thousands of enemy soldiers killed by Vickers guns would seem sufficient answer).

Despite claims to the contrary, the medium machine gun of the Maxim type is not truly an 'accurate' weapon. When facing frontal attacks, its limited speed of traverse made it possible for attacking troops to advance in short rushes — a technique which the Germans perfected. The use of enfilade fire from systems of mutually supporting machine gun 'nests' or blockhouses, which ensured that advancing troops had to walk through a constant stream of fire from both left and right flanks, was far more effective, and such positioning of machine guns became the norm.

The weapon was, in fact, at its most effective when firing at 800 to 1,200 yards, when it formed a 'beaten zone' within which, theoretically at least, nothing could survive. This phenomenon was due to the recoil of the

weapon jerking the barrel up and down on the tripod, allowing alternate shots to rise and fall slightly. The bullets from any one burst strike the ground in a pattern shaped like a leaf, or a Zulu shield; and disciplined bursts, regularly traversed, overlap to form a large area of swept ground.

However, experienced gunners could achieve remarkable feats of accuracy when the occasion demanded. One such was Pte. Tom Hall of the 200th MG Coy. whose team, having advanced into enemy trenches on the Aisne, were troubled by a sniper in a reserve trench 200 yards away. Careful observation pinpointed the man; and as he bobbed up to fire again, Hall silenced him with a single round from a Vickers. Subsequent inspection showed that one bullet had struck the sniper in the forehead.

The Vickers did suffer from a number of operational problems that were never entirely overcome. Its high profile was difficult to camouflage in trench warfare, though this was to some extent solved by the appearance of the 'overbank mounting' shown in the accompanying illustration. At night it emitted an awesome stream of flame. One attempt to hide this involved the issue of a 'stovepipe', a piece of 4in.-diameter piping 20in. long which fitted over the muzzle

and blanked out the flash. In practice it filled with unexploded gas, which was ignited by every twelfth round fired with a blast which was visible for miles. Gun crews usually managed to lose the 'stovepipes'.

More serious problems were apparent in cold weather. Once the water in the jacket boiled it emitted a plume of steam which hung in the cold air like a low cloud. Firing short bursts and not allowing the weapon to overheat was one solution, as was wrapping empty sandbags around the water can to absorb the moisture.

A greater problem in freezing conditions was the water in the jacket turning to ice, or the mechanism seizing up as the oil became gummy.



**Above:**  
Front and rear of the padded 'waistcoat' issued to Nos. 1 and 2 of Vickers teams for protection when carrying the heavy gun and tripod. (Paul Hannon).

**Left:**  
Vickers team on the Somme, summer 1916. Both No.1 and No.2 wear the padded 'waistcoat' and P11 gas helmets. The gun has a small 'emergency' tripod fitted to the jacket, its legs held up out of the way with straps. This was provided to enable the team to get the gun into action quickly if there was no time to mount it on the Mk IVB tripod. (Imperial War Museum)





**Left:**

(A) 2nd Lt., 11th Brigade MG Co., 4th Div., July 1916. The unit was formed on 23 December 1915, and served at Ypres, the Somme, and at Arras in 1917, alongside the other MG companies of the division (10th, 12th, and 23rd Service, originally; reorganized into lettered companies of 4th Bn., Machine Gun Corps on 26 February 1918).

He wears the standard officer's SD tunic; buttons and collar badges could be either gilt or bronzed. Cuff ranking bears a single 'pip'. The company badge of cut-out yellow cloth was worn on both upper sleeves by all ranks. The holstered Webley Mk VI revolver is worn on the wide '08 pattern webbing belt; officers were instructed to acquire these, from wounded men to save expense, as early as December 1914. The generously-cut khaki twill breeches, with polar buckskin knee-grip reinforcement, are confined in one of several popular patterns of heavy-soled trench boots, this version secured by laces and a buckled cuff. He carries a heavy ashplant walking stick. Secured under his belt is the cotton drill bag containing his PH gas helmet. His shrapnel helmet, recognisable as the first pattern by its two-part chinstrap, is painted bluish apple green as frequently seen on early helmets — later ones were usually painted khaki or olive; it bears a pointed MGC badge, though brazed-on cap or collar badges were not infrequently seen.

(B) Sleeve badge of the 218th

MG Co., which joined the 8th Div. on 23 February 1917.

(C) Sleeve badge, 127th Bde. MG Co., 42nd Div., formed in Egypt on 14 March 1916.

(D) Sleeve badge, 8th MG Bn., formed 20 January 1918.

(E) Shoulder title in use from October 1915 by all Motor MG units.

(F) Royal Navy MG Detachment, 190th Bde., 63rd RN Div.; formed May 1916.

(G) Shoulder title, 6th or Machine Gun Regt. of Foot Guards. This had four battalions plus one reserve; service battalions were 1st Life Guards Bn., 2nd Life Guards Bn. (this title), 3rd Royal Horse Guards Bn., and 4th Foot Guards Bn. The regiment served in the Guards Division, and was formed in May 1918.

**Right:** Reconstruction of Nos 1 and 2 of a gun team carrying the tripod and gun. No. 1 wears the padded waistcoat; note holstered pistol — .455 Webley, or Colt, or Smith & Wesson — issued to No. 1s and acquired by any other team member who could scrounge one, in place of a rifle. Note that tripod is early Mk IV Maxim, fitted with large brass traversing ring; later Mk IVB dispensed with this, had shorter rear leg, and weighed about 7lb. less. The brass elevating wheel can be seen under the end of the crosshead, and the traverse locking handle under the front part of the traversing ring. Lacking a waistcoat, this No. 2 holds the gun so as to benefit from the minimal protection of his broad webbing shoulder brace.

## THE MACHINE GUN CORPS

The Machine Gun Corps was formed in October 1915. Initially MGC Companies took the number of the infantry brigade which they served: e.g. 100th Coy. MGC, mentioned in the text, supported 100th Infantry Brigade in 33rd Division. Later each division received a fourth company, usually numbered in the 200 series.

Early in 1918 the companies within each division were formed into a battalion which took the number of the division: e.g. the 10th, 11th, 12th and 23rd Cos. within 4th Division became A,B,C, and D Cos., 4th Bn., MGC.

The Cavalry section of the MGC, also formed in October 1915, also took their unit

numbers from the brigades they supported. They were formed in squadrons rather than companies — e.g. 6th Cavalry Brigade MG Squadron. Eventually there were 26 of these squadrons; but they were not formed into regiments in parallel with practice in the MGC(I) in 1918.

While infantry machine gun companies marched, with limbers for their equipment, cavalry squadrons rode — also with equipment limbers. Motor Machine Gun units rode in motorcycle combinations, which also carried their equipment.

In all 170,500 men of all ranks served in the Machine Gun Corps; of these, 62,049 became casualties.

Glycerine added to the water was not a totally effective solution. As one officer noted, the only way to ensure that the gun was kept in usable condition under these circumstances was for

it to be dismounted and kept warm by human body contact. Sleeping with a Vickers gun was, presumably, low on the list of recreational priorities for the average MGC soldier.



**Above:** The No.2 prepares to feed the brass tag of a belt into the feed block.

**Below:** The gun, a Crayford-made Mk 1, mounted and ready for use. Note condenser can; detail of No.1's waistcoat; and wreathed 'MG' machine gunner's proficiency badge on left forearm.





MG team of 34th Bn. MGC; the corporal No.1 wears the small black/white checkerboard sign of 34th Division on his shoulder, above the 1st Class Machine Gunner proficiency badge worn as part of his badge of rank, possibly indicating an instructor.

In hot weather shortage of water was a continual problem. Nature provided a limited supply in emergencies, and Pte. Coppard recalls filling the gun with urine; the main drawback was the appalling smell. If the jacket were holed by enemy fire, a Vickers would soon become unserviceable as it overheated — one of the reasons that it was not suitable for use in the early tanks, where a high volume of enemy return fire was inevitable.

(As a point of interest, the old story of machine gunners firing off belts to heat water for tea seems to be unfounded. Apart from having to explain away the expenditure of three belts of ammunition, they would certainly have found the taste atrocious, since the cooling water was full of mineral oil, cordite and rust particles. Pte. Tom Hall, who admitted trying it

against the advice of his comrades, suffered the consequences for 24 hours thereafter).

Mechanically, the weapon was strongly made, and there were few breakages that could not be field-repaired, drawing upon the large supply of spares kept. Faulty ammunition or poorly filled belts were a recurrent problem, and much spare time was spent in checking belts to ensure smooth functioning.

By and large, veterans who used the Vickers are positive in their praise of the gun. Its weight was a curse, particularly under Great War conditions; but in a static rôle its capabilities, both offensive and defensive, were considerable.

The rôle of the medium machine gun — a term which in fact post-dates the First World War — was not seriously challenged by the more mobile doctrines which

shaped tactics from late 1918, and throughout the Second World War. The appearance of efficient and plentiful squad light automatic weapons among the infantry did not invalidate the heavy, tripod-mounted machine gun's place in the battalion's support elements; and in the British Army the Vickers was not officially declared obsolete until 24 August 1964. But even though, in modified if basically unaltered form, the Vickers soldiered on for more than 45 years after the 1918 Armistice, it is probably inevitable that the Maxim-type machine gun retains its lingering image as the grim reaper of Great War battlefields. Its mastery was never again to be quite so brazen as on those first killing-grounds; and countless war memorials bear mute witness to the impartial efficiency with which it ruled them.

■

#### Technical information:

*Calibre:* .303 in.

*Gun weight (dry):* 33 lb.

*Gun weight (wet):* 40 lb.

*Mk IVB tripod:* 50 lb.

*Ammunition:* Mk VII or VIIZ ball

*Method of feed:* 250-rd. webbing belt, two ply, riveted with brass eyelets.

*Boxed ammunition weight:* 21 lb.

*Sights:* Front blade, rear graduated to 2,000 yards with 400-yard battle sight

*Length:* 43 in.

*Muzzle velocity:* 2,440 fps

*Max. cyclic rate:* 550 rpm

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# The London Trained Bands, 1588 (1)

JOHN TINCEY  
Paintings by RICHARD HOOK

The victory of the English navy — and English weather — over Spain's Armada spared the kingdom from invasion; and as her land defences were not tested, historians have disregarded Elizabeth's military preparations, or have dismissed them as rudimentary and chaotic. However, an examination of the surviving records shows that for at least a decade the Queen's Privy Council had been working to construct a militia of over 150,000 men to defend England's shores.

## ORIGINS OF THE TRAINED BANDS

In the reign of Henry VIII the militia was capable of putting 120,000 men into the field to guard against invasion from France. London played a large part in these defence arrangements; and in 1532 the city militia paraded through the streets in order to impress foreign ambassadors. Stow records their appearance:

'A General Muster in London; wherein were taken the names of all Men within the City and Liberties, from the Age of 16, unto 60, the Harnesses, and all sorts of Weapons of War being also taken Account of. They then drew out only such able Men as had white Harnesses<sup>(1)</sup>; and caused them all to appear in white Coats and Breeches, and white Caps and Feathers. Maior, Aldermen, Recorder, Sheriffs, and all that had been Sheriffs, had white Harness; and over that, Coats of black Velvet, with the Arms of the City embroidered thereon: each one a great Gold chain, and well mounted on Horses with rich Trappings: on their Heads Velvet Caps, and in their Hands Battle-Axes gilt. Each Alderman and the Recorder had four Halberdiers in white Silk or Buff-Coats, waiting on them with their Halberds gilt. And the Lord Maior had sixteen tall Men apparellled in white Sattin Doublets, Caps and Feathers, Chains of Gold,

and other gorgeous Attire, with long gilt Halberds'<sup>(2)</sup>.

All males between the ages of 16 and 60 were expected to serve in the militia. Their equipment and training were paid for by the populace organised on a county basis, but once the militiamen joined the Royal Army they came on to the payroll of the monarch. King Henry had the resources of the confiscated monasteries to pay his armies, but his successors found the treasury empty. The complexity of military technology, particularly the rise in popularity of firearms, made the militia increasingly obsolescent; and in 1573 the Trained Bands were created. Selected men were trained to use weapons which the property-owning classes provided according to their wealth. This was intended to provide a small, but properly trained and equipped force to defend against foreign invasion and internal unrest.

## The London Trained Bands

The trained bands were raised in each county by the Lord Lieutenant and his deputies, but it was London that produced the best and strongest Trained Bands. These were organised around the wards of the city, so that neighbours would serve in the same company, under the command of the merchants whose control of the city's commerce made them natural leaders of the community.



By the time of the Armada the London Trained Bands were organised into the East, West, South and North regiments, each consisting of ten companies<sup>(3)</sup>.

The first four companies of the East Regiment, for instance, were based on Portsoken, Allgate and the Tower wards. Portsoken contributed 146 men and borrowed four from Allgate; both the Tower and Allgate furnished whole companies of their own Trained Bands-men, but combined their surplus to form another company. The aim of all this shuffling of manpower was to achieve standard companies of 150 men. Muster returns for 1588 state that all companies were equipped alike with 15 musketeers, 60 calivermen, 60 pikemen and 15 halberdiers.

In support of the 6,000 Trained Bands-men were 4,000 men who were untrained but armed. As well as commanding a Trained Band company, each officer was also listed as commanding a company of 100 untrained men armed with 30 calivers,

Officers of the Honourable Artillery Company. Illustrations of soldiers of the year before the Armada appear in the 'Funeral of Sir Philip Sidney' by Thomas Lant<sup>(4)</sup>. Among those depicted in the funeral cortège of the great English hero are 'Cytizens of London practised in Armes', and it has been claimed that these figures represent the Honourable Artillery Company. The officer leading the band is identified as Thomas Smyth, who appears in a 1588 list<sup>(5)</sup> as captain of the Bishopsgate Ward Trained Band, and it is possible that the soldiers depicted are Trained Bands-men rather than the HAC. Unfortunately, the officers' list of 1588 does not record the names of the company lieutenants, so we do not know if William Allen, depicted in the Lant Roll, served in the Bishopsgate company; the lack of a list of members of the HAC for the period prevents us from cross-referencing. One of the Sheriffs of the city, and an Essex supporter at the time of the Earl of Essex's attempted rising in 1601, Smyth managed to keep his head, but not his position: a 1600 list of the 'Trained Band'<sup>(6)</sup> officers notes that he is currently in prison. (The British Library)

40 pikes, 20 bows and 10 halberds<sup>(4)</sup>. All 10,000 trained and untrained London militia were called on to serve during the Armada crisis; so it may be that each

*Halberdiers of the HAC.* The dress of the Honourable Artillery Company's halberdiers and piken-men is much the same. The Lant Roll shows all the armour, swords, muskets, halberds and calivers of the other soldiers as being of set patterns, so it may be that the company purchased its equipment and weapons in bulk.

The ordinary Trained Bandsman was required by law to attend for military training, or to provide a suitable substitute. Citizens, including those who had not been selected for Trained Band service, were assessed according to their means and had to provide weapons for Trained Band use. A citizen might therefore find himself performing his drill in person but using equipment provided by several other people; or he might provide the equipment for several other men, but pay a substitute to perform his own Trained Band service. This could lead to a soldier being badly turned out by miserly neighbours, or to a Trained Bandsman sending an inexperienced proxy to the war in his place. Preventing this kind of abuse took up a great deal of the authorities' time, and documents prove that checks were made and defaulters prosecuted. (The British Library)

#### Below:

*Musketeers of the London Trained Bands.* In 1588 the musket was a relatively new weapon, having only been introduced by the Spanish Army of Flanders in the early 1570s. Its chief advantage over the caliver was that it fired the much larger bullet necessary to pierce contemporary armour. Its great disadvantage was its weight, which required a rest to support the barrel while aiming. The rest increased the awkwardness of the loading drill, even when suspended on a cord around the wrist (just visible, trailing from the forked end, in this picture), and proper training in loading postures became essential. (The British Library)

two companies were intended to combine to form a 250-strong unit.

In addition to the London Trained Bands, 1,100 men were drawn from the 26 'outliberties' of the City such as Houndsdyche, High Holburne and the parishes of Southwark. They were formed into five companies of various sizes, and unlike the London Trained Bands boasted three colonels amongst their officers. Their individual equipment allocations are not known, but they totalled 750 calivers and 350 pikes<sup>(5)</sup>.

In 1585 an English expeditionary force was sent to



support the Dutch in their war of liberation against Spain. It became increasingly clear that in the near future England would find itself under attack, and the activities of the Trained Bands took on a more serious note. Some 5,000 men from the London Trained Bands camped on Blackheath for six to eight days inside specially constructed entrenchments, and were reviewed by the queen. Stow in his chronicle of the City

records that: 'Many of these Men put themselves voluntarily to Charges, in making new Coats and providing themselves Scarfs and Feathers, and such like'<sup>(3)</sup>.

A manuscript exists which describes the arrangements made for the marching watch on the night of St John the Baptist and St Peter. This was a form of torchlight military parade through the city, involving morris dancers and boys in paper armour engaging in mock

combat. The Trained Bands were to supply 1,200 men for the occasion, and the required standard of dress and equipment was carefully noted:

'Souldiers 408 weaponed with callyvers & the furniture thereof as flaske, touchbox, match, powder, morrion, cote of male, sworde, daggars, & cleanlye hose, & for defaulte of cote of male, some clenlye Jerkine, with sleves of male, & that their morrions be made fast under their chynnes soldierlike.'

'Bowmen 312, with bowes & sheffes of arrowes covered wit red leather, swordes, daggers, scullis in red scottishe capps & their armoure to be brigantynes or Jacks covered with black fustian & clenlye hose.'

'Pykes 408 talle men armed in bright corslets, burganetts, swords, daggars, & clenlye hose the tacies of their Armour to be made fast to their thighs and their burganetts under their chynnes soldierlike.'

'Halberders 72 armed in bright corsletts, fayer burganetts, swords, daggars, & clenlye hose, their tacies and burganetts to be made fast as aforesaid.'<sup>(7)</sup>

The Trained Bands were not provided with uniform clothing by the authorities until they were called to serve in a Royal Army. It is obvious that they were some way behind the soldiers depicted in the Lant Roll<sup>(8)</sup> in their ideas on military fashion; but improvements were made, and by 1588 the bow had disappeared from the Trained Bands and the musket had been introduced.

#### The Honourable Artillery Company

London had the major advantage that it was the home of the 300-strong Honourable Artillery Company. This was a voluntary society that practised weapon-handling and military drill at its own 'Artillery Ground' near Bishopsgate. The company conferred social and business advantages upon its members; but their interest in military affairs

was real, for they met every Thursday to practise their drill, and they took it in turn to carry out the duties of all the ranks from corporal to captain. At this time the term 'artillery' referred to all hand-held missile weapons, so that bows were as much in evidence as primitive hand guns<sup>(9)</sup>.

**The security of the City**  
Aside from their duty to serve against invasion and rebellion, the chief obligation of the Trained Bands was to maintain the security of the city. A document drawn up in 1586 lists 17 articles to protect the city from 'the Traiterous, and sudden Attempts of all Conspirators and Traiterous whatso-ever'<sup>(10)</sup>. Firstly, the Alder-



#### LONDON TRAINED BANDS, 1588

A list of the Trained Band companies of London in 1588, taken from Robinson's *Survey, or Muster...* of 1600 — see Note 3. Each entry shows the company number within the regiment; one or more of the Wards of London; the number of men they supplied to that company, in brackets; the 'Capteynes'; and a heraldic description of the 'Ensignes' or flags — these will be discussed in slightly more detail, and examples illustrated, in Part 2 of this article, and it should be noted that Robinson's use of heraldic terms is often incorrect.

#### LONDON'S EAST REGIMENT WARDES

1. Portsoken (146) Allgate (4); Gowen Smith; 'Argent, Crosse Azure, Port Or in Chief, with these letters PORTSOKEN. Or'.
2. Allgate within (150); Benjamyn Auys; 'Vert, Azure and Or panes Crosse Ruge in Argente field Chief'.
3. Tower (8) Allgate (142); Thomas Awdley; 'Azure, Or and Argent panes, Cross Ruge in Argent field Chief'.
4. Tower of London (150); Nicholas Stodderd; 'Argent and Sable waves spurr Rowells Or, Crosse Ruge in field Argent Chief'.
5. Billingsgate (142) Tower (8); William Towrson; 'Argent and Ruge waves Crosse Ruge in field Argent Chief'.
6. Billingsgate (77) Bridg (73); Christofer Wehh; 'Azure and or waves Cross Ruge p'tout'.
7. Bridge (147) Langburn (3); Richard Morice; 'Argent and Ruge panes Cross Ruge in field Argent chief'.
8. Langhurn (150); John Jolles; 'Argent and Sable waves Cross Ruge p'tout'.
9. Lyme St (59) Langburn (56) Bishopsgate (35); Thomas Ferrys; 'Argent and Sable panes Cross Ruge in Argent field chief'.
10. Bishopsgate (150); Thomas Smith; 'Azure and Or dyamonds Cross Ruge in field Argent chief'.

#### LONDON'S NORTII REGIMENT WARDES

1. Cornhill (114) BrodSt (26) Bishopsgate (10); John Bowser; 'Argent and Sable waves Cross Ruge in fields Argent chief'.
2. Brodstreet (150); Thomas Barret; 'Argent and Sable waves Cross Ruge in field Argent chief'.
3. CollmanSt (113) BrodSt (17); George Barnes; 'Azure and Or waves Cross Ruge in field Argent chief'.
4. Bassingha (73) BrodSt (31) Cripplegate (46); Roht. Offley; 'Argent and Oringe-tawney waves Cross Ruge in field Argent chief'.
5. Cripplegate (150); Gerard Gore; 'Argent and Sable waves Cross Ruge in field Argent chief'.
6. Cripplegate (150); Baptist Hazell; 'Argent and Ruge waves field Argent in chief'.
7. Cripplegate (150); Anthony Galle; 'Argent and Vert panes Cross Ruge in field Argent chief'.
8. St. Martin (59) Cripplegate (58) Farringdon Within (33); James Denton; 'Argent and Sable panes Cross Ruge in field Argent chief'.
9. Aldersgate (150); Martin Bond; 'Vert and Or panes, Cross Ruge p'tout'.
10. Cheapsyde (150); Samuel Saltonstall; 'Argent and Sable panes Cross Ruge in field Argent chief'.

#### LONDON'S WEST REGIMENT WARDES

1. Faringdon Within (150); Richard (40); Nicholas Heathe; 'Sable and Or

Targetier of the HAC. Despite their combat service in the Low Countries, sword-and-buckler men had been rendered obsolete by the increasing use of firearms by 1588. When the pikeman had reigned supreme the targetier — who could slip between or under the massed pikes — had been useful; but with musket and caliver to blast away the ranks of pikemen, the vulnerable targetier lost his employment. The shield lapsed into being little more than a status symbol for officers. Only three targetiers appear among the 250 soldiers who marched in the Sidney funeral procession, and they may be an honorary escort to the captain and lieutenant; in this ceremonial rôle a targetier appears as late as the 1630s, among the statues of soldiers at Cromwell House. (The British Library)

men were to examine their wards and list the names of those householders, their servants and children who

panes Cross Ruge in chief'.

2. Faringdon Within (150); John Martin; 'Argent and Vert panes Cross Ruge p'tour'.
3. Faringdon Within (150); Anthony Wilcock; 'Azure and Or panes Cross Ruge p'tour'.
4. Cheapside (65) Faringdon Within (46) Castlebaynard (39); John Megges; 'Argent and ruge panes cross ruge p'tour'.
5. Faringdon Withoute (150); Willyam Becher; 'Argent and ruge panes cross ruge p'tour'.
6. Faringdon Withoute (150); George Leyster; 'Azure and Or dyamonds Cross Ruge field Argent in medio'.
7. Faringdon Withoute (150); Henry parvis; 'Argent and Sable panes Cross Ruge in field Argent chief'.
8. Faringdon Withoute (150); Thomas Loe; 'Azure and Or panes Cross Ruge in field Argent chief'.
9. Faringdon Withoute (150); John Swinerton; 'Argent and Sable waves Cross Ruge in field Argent chief'.
10. Castlebaynard (150); Hughe Lea; 'Argent and Watchet panes Cross Ruge p'tour'.

#### LONDON'S SOWTHE REGIMENT WARDES

1. Castlebaynard (112) Queenhythe (38); Edmond Pershall; 'Argent and Ruge panes Cross Ruge p'tour'.
2. Queenhythe (150); Arnold Rutter; 'Argent and Azure panes Cross Ruge in field Argent chief'.
3. Bredstreet (98) Queenhythe (52); Willyam Powell; 'Argent and Sable panes cross Ruge p'tour'.
4. Bredstreet (122) Vynetree (28); Baptist Hickes; 'Azure and Or half dyamonds cross Ruge in field Argent chief'.
5. Dowegate (150); Henry Campyon; 'Azure and Or Panes Cross Ruge p'tour'.
6. Cordewanner St (110) Vynetree

Sergeants of the London Trained Bands. The rôle of a sergeant in training his company was laid down in 1562: '...must instruct soldiers as well by signes from them framed, as by words and deeds how to train, march and use themselves in all points according to the signs aforesaid; that is, laying the staff on his shoulder marching forth, the company doing the like, sometimes he traileth the same on the ground, sountimes coucheth the same as it were to encounter enemies, sometimes retireth so couched, still his face towards the enemies, sometimes standeth still advancith his staff on high, the company standing still giveth silence, and according to every sign by him framed they do the likr. Any soldier using himself to the contrary, or not keeping his array, he reproveth, according to his authority'.

These men wear a particularly high-crowned version of the hat worn not only by the Trained Bands but also by other soldiers and civilians in the Sidney cortege. The scarf could be worn wrapped round it as a hatband, or left trailing down the back. It seems to have been a point of high fashion for officers of all ranks to wear colourful sashes over their right shoulders. (The British Library)

were able to bear arms and were considered to be loyal and hostile to false religion. The most apt were to be made the leaders of 25 of their neighbours; and ten of these groups were to be placed under a captain of the band and his ensign. A place to assemble in an alarm was to be appointed, and every householder was to have ready 'in his Howse all Weapons and Furniture necessarie for himself and those of his Howse, to be appointed in this service'.

Every city gate was to be guarded from nine o'clock at night until six in the morning in winter, and from ten to five in summer; and the portcullises at every gate were to be checked and repaired. A special guard was to be placed on the 'Engine that serveth the Cyttie with Water' for fear that it would be sabotaged and the city set on fire. Chains were to be stretched across important streets to impede any attacker; and 1,000 trustworthy persons were to be ready with ladders and leather buckets to fight fires. Trenches and ramparts were to be constructed by 500 pioneers



equipped with mattocks and shovels.

In the event of an alarm, the Trained Bandsmen, led by their leaders of 25 men, were to hurry to their appointed assembly places and, forming into their companies, await orders from the mayor. Two companies were appointed to go directly to the mayor's house to defend him from any attempt by traitors or spies to kill him before he could organise the city's defences.

If the alarm came at night, every householder was to hang a lantern outside his door to illuminate the way for the city's defenders. Whatever the time of night or day anyone (and particularly any servant) who was not involved in the defence of the city was not to go out of doors once an alarm had been sounded.

Those who did not attend the Protestant Church were suspected of treasonable intent, and powers were reserved to exclude them from the city. It was especially feared that those whose houses were on the banks of the Thames might welcome an invader coming secretly up the river. **MII**

**To be continued:** Part 2 will describe the events of 1588 and its aftermath, and will illustrate further costumes and weapons, together with company ensigns.

## Opposite:

1

**London militia arquebusier at the time of Henry VIII, 1530s-40s.** White and green were the colours of the Tudor family, and white was often used by Henry VIII to clothe his courtiers and soldiers. The London militia were well turned out when they marched past their king in 1532, and before being allowed to join their ranks this arquebusier would have been thoroughly inspected by the alderman of the ward where he lived. His cap — which may cover a protective metal skullcap — is an inexpensive version of the head-dress worn by all classes. A source of 1544 tells us that soldiers are to be equipped with '...a cap to be made to put his sculle or sallette in... which William Taylor, tanner within Ludgate doth make for me, where you may have as many of them as ye lyf for eight pence the pece'. It is tied around with a piece of arquebus matchcord. His coat is made of cotton, then a more substantial material than the cloth of today, and is slashed to reveal the more expensive lining. His underdoublet is secured by two buttons at the cuff, and is tight to the elbow, where it expands into a puffed sleeve for ease of shoulder movement, and fashion. The short sleeves of his ringmail 'harness' or body armour are visible. His breeches are curiously padded, more as a matter of fashion than of protection; he wears plain stockings and simple slip-on shoes. The arquebus had a shorter barrel and smaller bore than the musket that was to supersede it. Unlike the caliver, it could not be relied upon to take the same size bullets as any other arquebus even if they had both been produced by the same manufacturer. This man wears no 'bandolier of boxes', but carries all his powder in a single flask: this means that he cannot accurately measure the charge, and has no finer-quality powder for use in the priming pan.

2

**London Trained Band archer, 1585.** The description of the marching watch contained in the Harleian MSS provides us

with a rare word-picture of soldiers of the London Trained Bands. It has escaped the authors of the classic uniform histories due to its being hidden among passages on the arrangements for a civilian festival. This archer wears a metal 'sculle' under his cloth cap; and a jack of metal plates, covered with black fustian — a coarse, thick, twilled cotton cloth. In London the eclipse of the bow was sudden: in 1585 a force of 1,200 Trained Bandsmen contained 312 archers (26%); but by 1588 the bow no longer featured amongst the Trained Bands, and only 20 out of 100 men in an untrained company were archers. Although the Privy Council had ordered that archers among the Trained Bands be replaced with 'shot' wherever possible, the controversy over the value of the bow continued. Sir John Smythe, who had charge of training the Essex contingent, wrote two books arguing for its retention; but the armour-penetration of the musket bullet finally decided the issue in favour of the gun.

3

**London Trained Band halberdier, 1585.** The halberd was a superior alternative to the 'bill' used by most county Trained Bands, which was a cheaply, and often badly made survival from the medieval armoury. The numbers of halberdiers deployed in London were small: only 72 out of 1,200 (6%) in 1585, and 15 per 150-man company in 1588. It is impossible to be exact about the uniform and equipment of the Trained Bands; except in time of war they wore their own clothing, and were at all times responsible for the purchase of their own arms. However, the description of the marching watch specifies the arms and armour that each man had to bring to the parade, and this provides us with an exact picture of what a well-turned-out Trained Bandsman should have looked like. The duty of the halberdier in battle was to protect the company ensign and to follow up a routed enemy to complete his defeat. In effect, the military theorists regarded the halberd as obsolete, but had to find a rôle for those enlisted by the Trained Bands.

## Notes:

- (1) Harnesse = body armour. 'White' harness = armour made of polished metal, as opposed to black or brown armour, which was given an anti-rust coating or treatment.
- (2) 'A General Muster in London' in Strype's *Stow* (London, 1720)
- (3) Robinson, Richard, *A Survey or Muster of the Armed and Trayned Companies in London 1588 and 1599* (London, 1600); see *JSAHR*, Vol. IV, p.68.
- (4) Harleian MSS 168
- (5) Robinson, *ibid.*
- (6) Strype's *Stow*
- (7) Harleian MSS 3741: 'A Booke

conteyning the mauer & order of a watche to be used in the Cittie of London upon the even, at Night of Saint John Baptist and Saint Peter as in tyme past hath bene accustomed.' (1585)

(8) Lant, Thomas, *Sequitor Celbritas & Pompa Funeris*, BL ref. C20 f12.

(9) Goold Walker, G., *The Honorable Artillery Company* (London, 1926)

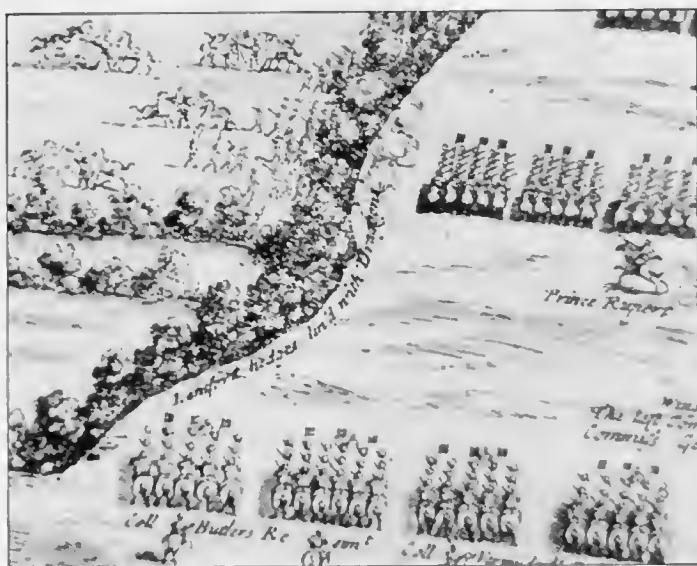
(10) 'The Mauer of ordring the Citizens of London, to the safe Keeping and Defence of that her Majesty's City, against the Traiterous and sudden Attempts of all Conspirators and Traiterous whatsoever', in Strype's *Stow*, see above.



# British Mounted Infantry (1)

MICHAEL BARTHORP  
Paintings by PIERRE TURNER

Naseby, 14 June 1645. As Prince Rupert led the Royalist Horse of the king's right wing against the Parliamentary left, the ranks were suddenly thinned by a fusillade of musketry from a hitherto unseen body of dismounted horsemen concealed behind hedges which flanked the Royalist advance. The firers were neither Horse nor Foot, but men of Colonel Okey's Dragoons of the New Model Army, trained to fight on foot but given horses for greater mobility.



Just 255 years later, in South Africa, the Boers on Diamond Hill had resisted the best efforts of the British cavalry and infantry throughout a long day's fighting. Towards evening a perceptive British colonel spotted the key to the Boer position. He sent troops galloping forward across the bullet-swept ground to the foot of a spur, where they dismounted and took up fire positions. Behind them came more mounted men who, covered by the first party, also dismounted, fixed bayonets, scaled the spur and drove the Boers from the ridge above. Their action secured the Boers' total abandonment of the Diamond Hill position. These troops were the 6th Bn., Regular Mounted Infantry and the New South Wales Mounted Rifles.

*Having left their mounts to their householders, Okey's Dragoons (left, middleground) advance to fire from hedgerows at Prince Rupert's attack on the Parliamentary left (foreground), during the Battle of Naseby, 1645. Detail from Streater's engraving from Joshua Sprigge's *Anglia Rediviva*, 1647. (P.J. Haythoruthwaite)*

## Right:

*Dragoons advancing with fascines across their saddles to fill in the ditches of the Schellenberg defences prior to the assault at Donauwörth, 1704. Detail from the De Vos tapestry. (Victoria & Albert Museum)*

① Superior numerals refer to the notes at the end of this article.



These two incidents, two and a half centuries apart, roughly demarcate the use of mounted men as foot soldiers by British arms in battle — although it could perhaps be said that the current use of APC-mounted infantry is a revival of an earlier tradition. The designation Mounted Infantry, or MI, is a purely 19th century term, adopted long after dragoons like Col. Okey's had been turned into cavalrymen; yet the 17th century dragoon was fun-

damentally a mounted infantryman and raised as such, possibly as early as 1560 in France, and used by both sides in the Thirty Years' War and the English Civil Wars. As the New Model was Britain's first standing or regular army, Okey's Dragoons must rate as the first regular MI of the British service.

Two 17th century quotations give conflicting views on the merits of these early MI. Lord Orrery in his *Art of*

*War* (1677) described them, in surprisingly modern terms, as 'infantry with horses to enable them to make more rapid movements. They were thrown forward to feel the way, skirmishing behind ditches as they advanced or covering a retreat in the same fashion; one man held ten horses in rear while his comrades, their riders, fought.' John Lacey, a dramatist and Royalist officer of Horse, gave a typically jaundiced

cavalryman's view in his play, *The Old Troop*: 'Rascals, did I not know you at first to be three tattered musketeers, and by plundering a malt-mill of three blind horses, you then turned dragoons.'

The first dragoons of the post-Restoration Army were the troops of Horse Grenadiers added to the Horse Guards (now Life Guards) in 1678. In action they 'dismounted, linked their horses, fired, screwed their daggers into the muzzles of their fusils, charged, returned their daggers, fired and threw their grenades by ranks'<sup>(1)</sup>. Actual dragoons, of whom several regiments were formed between 1681-97, exercised similarly except for the grenade-throwing. They were used at Sedge-moor by James II for outpost duties, escorting the guns and in pursuit of Monmouth's rebels. Under William III they saw service in Ireland and Flanders. At the Battle of Steenkirk (1692) William's Horse were unable to cover the retreat of his infantry owing to the close country through which the French were following up. The Horse Grenadiers, Fitzharding's Dragoons<sup>(2)</sup>, and some Dutch dragoons rode forward, dismounted, and

attacked the enemy's flank through the wood, thus gaining time for the infantry to rally.

During the assault on the Schellenberg in the War of the Spanish Succession the Royal Scots Dragoons<sup>(3)</sup> rode up to the ditches fronting the defences, threw in the fascines they had carried on their horses, and attacked on foot; as the enemy retreated, they remounted and rode on in pursuit. In the Spanish campaign, owing to a shortage of cavalry and dragoons, the first infantrymen to become MI were Pearce's Regiment<sup>(4)</sup> who were mounted from 1706-13. By the end of that war, however, dragoons were being increasingly used as cavalry. Since a dragoon was cheaper to maintain than a trooper of Horse, the Horse regiments were converted in 1746 into dragoons, being given the honorary title of Dragoon Guards; and henceforth a dragoon was a cavalryman and no longer a mounted infantryman.

MI now went into a decline for nearly a century, though enjoying a brief resurrection in 1779-81 in the southern American colonies during the War of Independence, chiefly under Banastre Tarleton, whose force not

only included his own partially-mounted Legion, but mounted infantrymen of the 63rd, 76th and 82nd Foot.

Among the Volunteer units raised for home defence during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars was a company of mounted riflemen attached to the Norfolk Rangers Yeomanry; and among the foreign regiments in British service was Hompesch's Mounted Rifles, which saw service in Ireland and Egypt, but chiefly as light cavalry.

As far as is known no regular infantry were employed as MI during these wars except for a company of the 54th which, after being converted to mounted riflemen at the Cape, was used at the capture of Montevideo in 1807. However, during the first British occupation of the Cape between 1795 and 1802, an MI company was raised in 1801 from the five battalions of the garrison for use against Xhosa tribesmen raiding across the eastern frontier. According to the famous John Shipp, then a soldier of the 22nd — one of the battalions concerned — this company wore green jackets with white trousers, or possibly pantaloons, with black half-gaiters; their head-

dress was probably the black felt 'round hat' as then used in India and required wear locally according to Cape Standing Orders, dated December 1795. Shipp said its arms were 'rifles with brown barrels', probably either the Baker or a German model.

## COLONIAL REVIVAL

Though it only existed for a year, this company, and the type of bush warfare it was engaged in, was the forerunner of MI's rebirth later in the century. Before that occurred, the advantages of mounting infantrymen for rapid movement, particularly in irregular warfare, were perceived by certain commanders. During the next Xhosa uprising in the Sixth Kaffir or Frontier War of 1835, Sir Harry Smith had the 75th Foot mount its Light Company on small horses to supplement the part-Coloured, part-European Cape Mounted Rifles<sup>(5)</sup>. Taught to ride by their Adjutant, the 75th MI received leather trousers, like the CMR's, which were worn with undress caps and jackets. They used the CMR's double-barrelled carbine, effective in bush warfare, carrying their ammunition in locally made pouches attached to waistbelts, both of untanned leather, instead of the normal infantry shoulder belts.

In 1843 the conqueror of Scinde, Sir Charles Napier, mounted 350 men of the 22nd Foot on camels, two per beast, for his expedition to reduce the Baluchis' distant desert fortress of Emaumghur. Camel-mounted infantry, of the 72nd Highlanders, 88th and Rifle Brigade, reappeared in the latter stages of the Indian Mutiny. At a critical mo-



Cape Mounted Rifleman in patrol dress, c.1850. He wears a Rifle-green cap, shell jacket and trousers; the leather 'crackers' had been dispensed with by this date. Pouch and sword belts are black; he is armed with a Light Cavalry sword and a double-barrelled carbine. Drawing by Capt. T.W. Goodrich, CMR. (National Army Museum)



*90th Light Infantry MI who formed Evelyn Wood's escort during the Zulu War, 1879. Uniform, stained foreign service helmets; scarlet serge frock with buff collar patches; brown corduroy pantaloons with infantry leggings; some bandoliers have leather cartridge loops, others of webbing or similar material. The weapon is the Swinburne-Martini carbine. (Africana Museum, Johannesburg).*

ment in the Battle of Kalpi (22 May 1858), Sir Hugh Rose sent 200 Riflemen on camels to the threatened point, where they dismounted and attacked on foot, completely reversing the tide of battle by their speedy arrival; the enemy, disconcerted by this sudden intervention, turned and fled, followed by the remounted Rifles in hot pursuit. According to Surgeon Sylvester who was present, the Riflemen were 'dressed in clothes of lavender hue'. Some of the

Rifle Brigade had been briefly mounted in the Crimea — on RHA guns and limbers to keep pace with the Light Cavalry Brigade during the advance on Sevastopol.

Appropriately it was from South Africa that the impetus was partially given towards official recognition of MI's value, and putting its provision, organisation and training on a more satisfactory basis than the extempore and sporadic arrangements existing hitherto. In 1875 Lt. Carrington of the 1/24th formed a 40-strong detachment, buying the horses and training the men himself, as an experiment. The GOC Cape commented that it had proved that 'picked officers and men from foot regiments can in a very short time be turned into mounted riflemen of the very best description'(<sup>6</sup>).

#### **OFFICIAL RECOGNITION**

During the Ninth Kaffir War (1877-78) the 1/24th and 88th both formed small MI detachments; and so useful were they that in 1878 Carrington was ordered to raise and train 300 MI from four battalions<sup>(7)</sup> to be known as 1st and 2nd Squadrons, Imperial Mounted Infantry. These, later joined by men from other battalions, gave valuable service in the Zulu War alongside the Colonial mounted contingents, and were also used in the crushing of Sekukini's revolt in the northern Transvaal afterwards. Battalions forming the permanent garrison thereafter each had its own MI detachment. How important they were and how useful more would have been was proved in the Transvaal

War of 1881 against the all-mounted Boer commandos. The need for mobile infantry to contend with a mounted enemy was solved on one occasion during the siege of Pretoria by ferrying forward part of the 21st in light mule-drawn carts to make a surprise, and completely successful dawn raid against the investing Boers. Following that campaign, an MI School was established at Pietermaritzburg in Natal under Capt. H.H. Parr, Somerset Light Infantry.

Trained in this school were some MI of 3/King's Royal Rifle Corps and 1/South Staffords, which were the first battalions to land in Egypt in 1882. They provided a 70-strong MI detachment, which kept a constant watch on the Egyptian lines eight miles away from the British beach-head at Alexandria to guard against any

surprise attack. This detachment was later doubled in strength by men from other battalions; and during the advance to Tel-el-Kebir was attached to the Cavalry Brigade to provide close infantry support, fulfilling much the same function as today's armoured infantry do for a tank force. 'The excellent work performed by these soldiers', wrote an officer, 'their self-reliance, quick eye for ground and rough-and-ready horsemanship, astonished everyone and their praises were in every man's mouth'<sup>(8)</sup>. Another said of this campaign, 'Mounted Infantry was the coveted service of the moment for it was on its trial; we had every opportunity of showing what could be made of it'<sup>(9)</sup>.

The value of MI in South Africa and Egypt provided corroboration for those thoughtful and progressive officers who for some years, and indeed prior to its use in these campaigns, had been urging its adoption, their ideas influenced by the vulnerability of traditional cavalry to the increasing lethality of rifled, breech-loading weapons, and the extensive use of mounted riflemen rather than 'shock-action' cavalry in the American Civil War. MI was advocated, not so much as a replacement for sword-and-lance cavalry, but as an adjunct, to cover the latter's movements from enemy infantry and, if possible, artillery, until the decisive moment for a charge arose. These views, first promulgated in the late 1860s, were taken up in 1872-74 by such well-known military progressives as Sir Evelyn Wood (see *MI* No.8), and Sir Garnet Wolseley, who in 1872 wrote that cavalry could 'seldom be of much decisive use; whilst the duties of obtaining information, protecting the flanks and concealing your movements can be more effectively performed by mounted infantry'<sup>(10)</sup>.

Cavalry traditionalists, whose view of MI was akin

to John Lacey's of dragoons, drew considerable, if misplaced comfort from examples of shock action in the Franco-Prussian War. However the British Cavalry, compared with its Continental equivalents, was relatively small and also expensive to maintain. Moreover, the Army's most common employment in the last quarter of the 19th century was in colonial irregular warfare against lightly-equipped, fast-moving guerrillas or fanatical hordes. Against such, and in difficult terrain, traditional cavalry, even if it was available, was often inappropriate or ineffective. Furthermore, infantry on foot could not effectively contend 'against such an enemy when it is a question of guarding from surprise, of making a rapid advance, or of completing a victory'<sup>(11)</sup>. A cavalryman, it was held, could not be trained as a mounted rifleman without detriment to his training as a shock instrument; an infantryman, on the other hand, could be trained to ride and manage a horse reasonably quickly without losing his infantry skills.

The arguments went on through the '70s and '80s, bedevilled as always by matters of cost — particularly that of maintaining any permanent body of MI. In the field, however, local commanders continued to improvise MI as occasion demanded. Ponies were issued to some battalions in

the Afghan War for mounting detachments but, with a dearth of MI-experienced officers, it was a failure. More successful were the British and Indian MI companies employed in the pacification of Burma after 1885.

The biggest MI force yet seen was Wolseley's brain-child, the Camel Regiments of the Gordon Relief Expedition. The inclusion of cavalrymen, hitherto untrained in infantry methods and weapons, in the Heavy and Light Camel Regiments was not an unqualified success; but the Guards and Mounted Infantry Regiments<sup>(12)</sup> saved the near-collapse of the square at Abu Klea, and convincingly repulsed the attack at Abu Kru by their musketry and steadiness. Their ability to manage their camels in a comparatively short time suggested that accustoming an infantryman to a horse was not a major problem affecting the formation of MI. In the two Suakin campaigns of 1884-85 both horse- and camel-mounted infantry proved invaluable for scouting, skirmishing and raiding. In South Africa a Royal Scots MI company took part in the bloodless Bechuanaland expedition of 1885 and the Zululand disturbances of 1888.

By now the MI lobby at home had won its case. From 1888 MI became an officially acknowledged, though not permanently embodied ele-

ment of the fighting Arms, with the twin objects of (a) providing an infantry force capable of co-operating with cavalry and horse artillery when required, chiefly for conventional warfare; and (b) providing as many infantry battalions as possible with a nucleus of selected officers and men trained as MI for service in colonial warfare.

## TRAINING AND ORGANISATION

To achieve this MI Schools were established, first at Aldershot and later at Shorncliffe, and at the Curragh in Ireland. These were to run 2½-month instructional courses for detachments, each of one officer and 32 NCOs and men who were either marksmen or first-class shots, from battalions serving at home, in riding, stable duties, infantry drill in single rank adapted for mounted service, and field firing, plus specialist instruction for shoeing-smiths, saddlers and transport drivers. After the course each detachment returned to normal duties in its battalion, though practising their MI rôle on annual manoeuvres.

Above all it was impressed on the men that they would remain infantrymen at all times, and that any horses, ponies, camels, bicycles or even wagons on which they might be mounted were issued purely to make them more effective as such. They were not substitute cavalry and would fight on foot, not from horseback.

For the early courses horses were borrowed from the Cavalry, but later specially purchased cobs were kept at the schools; when an MI force had to be assembled, the necessary remounts would be provided. Within

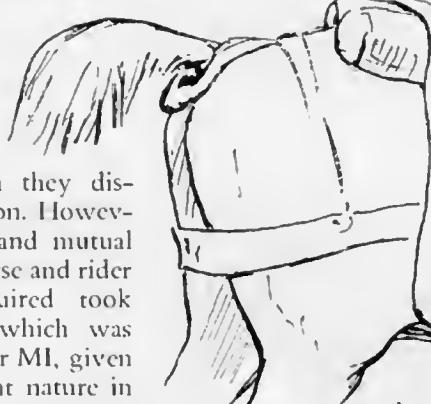


*Blurred but rare photograph of 94th Regiment MI at Pretoria during the Transvaal War, 1881. Uniform: stained helmets; scarlet serge frocks with green collar patches; cord pantaloons with knee boots; brown leather bandoliers, buff leather waist belts. A rifle or carbine is carried in a bucket behind the right leg, a sword in a scabbard attached to the saddle behind the left leg. (National Army Museum)*

each detachment the private soldiers were divided into permanent 'fours', which lived and worked together, each 'four' choosing its own leader. In action one was the horse-holder for the other three when dismounted.

This scale of horse-holders of course diminished the firepower of any MI unit by a quarter, a defect that would become particularly pertinent when facing Boers who required no horse-holders, or at most a few African boys, having trained their horses to

67th Regiment MI during the Afghan War, 1880; note improvised method of carrying the rifle, similar to that introduced in 1894 (see forthcoming Part 2 of this series). Locally-bred ponies were acquired for this MI, but the draught harness suggests that this is an artillery horse. Saddlery was of local manufacture. Uniform: Glengary; scarlet or khaki frock; blue trousers with red welt; khaki puttees; 1872 Valise pattern equipment, less valise; greatcoat folded on back. (India Office Library)



stand still when they dismounted for action. However, the training and mutual trust between horse and rider which this required took time to effect, which was never available for MI, given its non-permanent nature in peacetime. It was believed that four horses were the most one man could control effectively under fire and lead forward to a firing line; and furthermore such a group was less of a target to hostile musketry or artillery than, say, the 11-horse groups of the 17th century — which in any case, being linked together for control, took longer to remount.

A fixed establishment for an MI company was promulgated<sup>(13)</sup>, for which, when required for employment, four battalion detachments, or sections, would be nominated. A number of such companies could be grouped to form a battalion or alternatively, if only a small force was needed, a battalion detachment could act independently. A mobilised cavalry brigade was to have two MI companies attached to it. An example of how this worked in practice occurred in 1896 when an MI battalion of four companies was formed at Aldershot for service in Rhodesia following the Matabele Rebellion, each company consisting of four sections: the first company from English batta-

lions, the second from Rifles, the third from Highland and the fourth from Irish battalions. By this means a spirit of healthy rivalry and emulation was nurtured between sections and companies, while the knowledge of being MI, and therefore distinctive, fostered the *esprit-de-corps* of the battalion as a whole.

For battalions serving in South Africa, Egypt and Burma similar instruction was organised locally to give each battalion a proportion of MI-trained men so that at least a section, at most a company might be readily available. 2/Duke of Wellington's, stationed in Natal, was able to provide a two-section company from its own resources for the Matabele Rebellion before the Aldershot battalion could arrive.

By the late 1890s, with its official establishment tables, its own regulations and field



service manuals, MI was as much an accepted part of the Army as the other, older Arms; its only difference from them was that it was not a permanent force. To mobilise it all that was required was to assemble the sections from battalions, issue the necessary clothing and equipment for mounted duties<sup>(14)</sup>, and requisition the remounts. Such a system was of course facilitated by having a regular, rather than a conscript army.

#### SOUTH AFRICA

In parallel with these developments, some of the autonomous colonial governments, particularly in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, included MI or mounted riflemen as basic units of their own militia forces as more suitable for their countries than conventional foot infantry.

Their foresight was to pay dividends when the South African War broke out in 1899, for this was to prove more an MI campaign than

anything else. Yet so little was this foreseen by the British military authorities that when the colonial governments first offered contingents, they were told that infantry would be preferable. Canada initially complied, though its subsequent contingents were Mounted Rifles; but the Australian and New Zealand MI and Mounted Rifles units, as well as their later Bushmen and Roughriders, not to mention the many South African mounted units like the Imperial Light Horse, Thorneycroft's MI and Natal Carabiniers, not only gave excellent service but often showed their British counterparts how the work should be done.

Notwithstanding the efforts of the true MI believers between 1888 and 1899, the concept of MI had never been wholeheartedly accepted in the Army's upper echelons and, despite the numbers trained pre-war, it was soon apparent that the field army in South Africa

was woefully short of this Arun. Furthermore the Regular Cavalry, by its pre-war emphasis on sword-and-lance, was ill-suited for war on the veldt. Thus more MI battalions had to be hurriedly formed, from Regulars, Colonials and, later, from the Imperial Yeomanry, the Militia and Volunteer Forces — even from redundant gunners.

Initially, at least, results were less than successful, due to a dearth of MI-trained officers, and through many of the men having to learn to ride and their new trade as they went along; ignorance of horse-mastership, too, led to appalling losses in horses. However, by the end of the war 28 battalions of Regular MI (including Militia and Volunteers) had been formed; and though the British MI soldier, man for man, may never have attained the skill of his Boer

opponent, who was trained to horse and rifle almost from birth, the MI generally improved apace and enjoyed some resounding successes — certainly more than their supposed superiors of the Cavalry who, by and large, did not have 'a good war'.

After the war it was decided that MI training must be stepped up to provide a larger reserve of such men than had been available in 1899, since the war had demonstrated that there was more to making an MI soldier than simply telling an infantryman to get on a horse. At the same time consideration of the Cavalry's future became sharply divided between two schools of thought. One, led by Lord Roberts, believed that sword-and-lance, knee-to-knee shock action was now an anachronism, and that the rifle should become the cavalryman's primary

weapon. The other, led by the two cavalrymen French and Haig (the future Commanders-in-Chief in France in 1914-18) and supported — somewhat curiously — by several officers who had led MI columns in South Africa, claimed that, since the Boer War had been a never-to-be-repeated oddity, and that Continental armies still maintained large cavalry forces for shock action, that rôle must remain pre-eminent. Before Roberts retired in 1903 he had abolished the lance for active service and introduced the infantry SMLE rifle for cavalry use, but thereafter his influence declined and the shock action school's cause flourished (including the lance's return in 1907)<sup>(f5)</sup>.

The effect of this controversy upon the MI was, to put it simply, that its cause got overwhelmed by the

argument, due to the Roberts school losing ground, its own lack of influential officers to argue its case, and its non-permanent status compared with the very permanent (and powerful) Cavalry. The Infantry itself had never been enthusiastic about losing what were often its best soldiers to MI. British and Indian MI companies were employed in the 1902 and 1903 Somaliland expeditions against the Mad Mullah, but this was MI's last appearance on active service. The Aldershot MI School continued to run

Fully-equipped mounted infantryman according to regulations devised by Capt. Parr's Pietermaritzburg MI School, Natal, c.1881. The Martini-Henry is carried in the 'Namqua' bucket officially authorised for all MI from 1882. For details of other kit on horse, see forthcoming Part 2. Uniform: foreign service helmet, with normal infantry undress for marching order. Equipment: leather bandolier, 1872 pattern waist belt with 1877 pouch, bayonet on near side, haversack over right shoulder, Oliver water bottle over left — visible behind rifle. (National Army Museum)



courses as before; but in 1913 it was closed down, and Mounted Infantry ceased to be used in the British Army. Those who had believed in it may have drawn some consolation from the fact that its rival, the British Cavalry, achieved perhaps its finest hour in 1914 at First Ypres, not with knee-to-knee charges, but as dismounted riflemen. As things turned out, there was no place for MI in 20th century warfare, any more than there was for horsed cavalry.

MI

**Below:**

A typical Dragoon of no specific regiment, c.1690, based on clothing lists and C.C.P. Lawson, Vol. 1 (see Sources); due to lack of contemporary pictorial evidence, the figure must be to some degree speculative. Both the fur bag cap shown and the black felt hat, often turned up in front only, were worn at this date. Dragoons' dress was closer to that of the Foot than the Horse, which had crimson coats and leather breeches. Dragoons' waistcoats and breeches matched the coats except in Royal

regiments, who wore blue. Their boots were cheaper than the Horse's jacked type, possibly because the dismounted rôle required greater pliability. Each private had a saffron musket with sling, two pistols and saddle holsters, a waist belt with frogs for sword and bayonet, a cartridge box with shoulder belt, and a hammer-hatchet. Like the Foot, dragoon sergeants carried 'halberts'. Each troop had drummers and haubois, not trumpets like the Horse.

**To be continued:** Part 2 will describe and illustrate MI uniforms and equipment in detail.

**Notes:**

Some references are made to the source list, which for reasons of space will be held over to Part 2 of this series.

(1) Sibbald Scott, *The British Army* Vol. I (1868), quoted Purdon (see Sources).

(2) Later 4th Dragoons and 4th Hussars.

(3) Later 2nd Dragoons, Royal Scots Greys.

(4) Later 13th Foot, Somerset Light Infantry.

(5) See 'Gallery' article, this issue; and also Osprey Men-at-Arms 193, *The British Army on Campaign 1816-1902 (I): 1816-53*.

(6) Gen. Sir. A. Curvingham, quoted JSAHR, Vol. XXII, p.177.

(7) 2/3rd, 1/13th, 1/24th, 80th.

(8) Hutton (see Sources).

(9) Lt. D.R. Dawson, Coldstream Guards, quoted JSAHR, Vol. XXII, p.178.

(10) Quoted Anglesey, II (see Sources).

(11) Goodenough (see Sources).



(12) Three companies of the latter came from battalions stationed in Egypt, the fourth from battalions at home; 16 battalions were represented in the MI Regt. The Guards Regt. had three companies from the seven Guards battalions at home, and one of Royal Marines.

(13) 1 maj./capt. commanding, 4 subalterns; 1 CSM, 5 srgts., 6 cplrs., 2 sgt.-farriers (cavaliermen), 4 shoeing-smiths, 2 buglers, 97 privates, 5 dismounted men (servants etc.), 5 cooks and waggoners, 1 saddler; 133 all ranks.

(14) To be covered in Part 2.

(15) That the Cavalry did learn to shoot, as it proved in 1914, owed much to senior Infantry generals like Smith-Dorrien, to some wavering by French, and to some progressive Cavalry officers. For this controversy, see Anglesey, IV, pp.388-423 (see Sources).

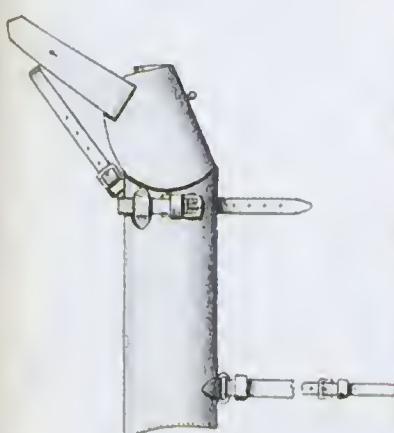
**Left:**

*Mounted Infantryman, 75th Foot Light Company, South Africa, 1835: based on descriptions in the United Services Journal (1836) and reminiscences of Maj. Gen. de Berry in The Broad Arrow (1901). A variation on the undress shell jacket shown here was the dress coatee docked of tails and wings. The red leather peak to the forage cap, and the leather breeches ('crackers'), were obtained at the Cape, as were the untanned leather pouches, waist belts and boots, with which spurs were worn. The rolled greatcoat strapped across the front of the saddle contained*

'necessities' — spare shirt, trousers and socks; rations were carried in the haversack. The double-barrelled carbine, as issued to the Cape Mounted Rifles, had a rough sheepskin cover to protect the working parts; 22 rounds were carried in the pouch. De Berry states that cutlasses were issued but does not identify the pattern: like the CMR's swords, they were probably seldom used. Harness and saddlery were 'as for cavalry', probably the Light Cavalry pattern used by the CMR — see Men-at-Arms 138, British Cavalry Equipments 1800-1941.

**Right:**

*Corporal, 1/South Staffords MI, Egypt, 1882, based on a photograph. Unlike some battalions in Egypt his helmet bears the regimental star plate and has no puggaree. His serge frock is faced white, conforming with the new facing colours ordered in 1881 after the reorganisation of the Infantry from numbered to territorial regiments. During this campaign ordinary infantry wore these frocks with blue trousers and leggings, but the source photograph shows MI with what appear to be cord pantaloons and canvas gaiters. Equipment worn by MI was the 1872 Valise pattern with 1877 20-round pouches, haversack and Oliver water bottle, but without shoulder braces. In the photograph the Martini-Henry rifles are without slings; but another white strap or belt across the right shoulder may be the sling carried thus for use when required. The 'Namaqua' rifle bucket (see inset drawing) was not approved for universal MI use until after this campaign; but as it had been used in South Africa supplies may have been available for the MI in Egypt, some of whom had been trained at the Pietermaritzburg school.*

**Above:**

*Camel-Mounted Infantryman of the 72nd Highlanders, Indian Mutiny, 1859, based on drawings by Lts. E.J. Upton, 72nd, and J.N. Crealock, 95th, and the recollections of James Briscoe, 72nd. The regimental 'hummel' bonnet was fitted with a peak and enclosed in a locally-purchased turban as protection from the sun. On landing at Bombay in January 1858 the 72nd were issued with canvas 'smock-frocks' which were later dyed 'an earthy brown'. The 72nd were non-kilted, wearing trews of Prince Charles Edward*

*Stuart tartan. The equipment was the normal pouch belt with cap pouch affixed in front, and waist belt with bayonet frog and expense pouch. The rifle was the Enfield, carried when camel-mounted — according to Upton — in the hand across the saddle. Unfortunately Upton's sketch does not show clearly the camel furniture except far a saddle cover hanging well down on both sides, and possibly a greatcoat rolled at the back of the saddle. An officer appears on a pony, dressed like the men but with brown breeches and long boots.*

# A Tale of Two Guardsmen

PHILIP J. HAYTHORNTHWAITE  
Painting by BRYAN FOSTEN

Although the literature of the Napoleonic Wars is vast, the majority of the personal accounts concern commissioned officers. Memoirs of the rank-and-file do exist; but rarely is encountered a new relic or document which brings the anonymous ranker more sharply into focus. Two such collections are published here for the first time, both referring to members of the British Foot Guards in 1814-15, and linked by a remarkable coincidence. One provides significant new evidence regarding the uniform of the Guards at this period; the other relates to that most famous of Napoleonic battles, Waterloo. They are presented here in order of seniority of their regiments.

## THE PAYNE SELF-PORTRAIT

It is to John Hall of the Dept. of History, Albion College, Michigan, that we are indebted for permission to reproduce a most significant uniform-portrait of the 1st Foot Guards; and to Capt. D.D. Horn, Curator of the Guards Museum, Wellington Barracks, to which museum the portrait is currently on loan, that we owe thanks for access.

On 29 March 1804 Thomas Carden, Justice of the Peace of the City of Worcester, attested a recruit to the 1st Regiment of Foot Guards. The recruit was William Payne, aged 18 years, born in the Parish of Stoke, Worcester, of fair complexion and dark brown hair, 5ft. 5½in. tall. In 1802

*This front flap of a 'Belgic' shako is preserved in Brussels, at one time on display in the Royal Army Museum. It was claimed to be a relic of the Waterloo campaign, and was displayed with a Coldstream shako plate and a separate bugle-horn badge. Since its provenance is anecdotal at best, we are unable to say how much weight may be placed upon this combination of items as genuinely contemporary evidence of a practice which seems to be contradicted by the William Payne self-portrait (Courtesy John Mollo)*

he had served as a volunteer (which had perhaps given him a taste for military service); and was enrolled by a recruiting party under Ensign Davenport, whose corporal, Thomas Birkitts, witnessed Payne's attestation.

Having been examined by the surgeon R. Hill, who pronounced him 'fit for his Majesty's service' ('no Rupture, nor was ever troubled with Fits, and am no Ways disabled by Lameness or otherwise, but have the perfect use of my Limbs'), and having received the ten guineas bounty, Payne signed with a cross the Articles of War: 'I, William Payne, do swear to be true to our Sovereign Lord King

George, and to serve him honestly and faithfully, in Defence of his Person, Crown and Dignity, against all his Enemies or Oppressors, whatsoever: And to observe and obey His Majesty's Orders, and the Orders of the Generals and Officers set over me by His Majesty'.

Payne was illiterate when he enlisted, but learned to write a passable hand — though he was unable to spell correctly his own name, as evident from a note affixed to the rear of his self-portrait:

*'William Payen he Served as a volunteer in 1802 enlisted as a Soldier 1804 and in 1805 in Sicily he was in Spain with Sir John Moore at the retreat of Corunna then in Holland takeing of Filushing afterwards*



*in Spain under the duke of Wellington. Returned to England and was ordered to Ireland. Served 21 years and some days in the Grenadier Guards 8 Comy. his own likeness drawn by himself.*

That brief statement encapsulates a remarkable career in which Payne survived two of the most costly campaigns of the British army at the period: the horrors of the retreat to Corunna, and the disease-ridden expedition to Walcheren (the capture of Flushing). He survived to receive the Military General Service Medal with clasp for 'Corunna'.

Self-portraits by enlisted men are rare, but this one is especially significant due to the uniform depicted. Payne portrayed himself in 1815 wearing his best 'walking-out' uniform, and is obviously a member of the battalion light infantry company. The basic uniform is well known: a scarlet jacket with dark blue facings and white lace, the loops in the design known as 'bastion', the widening ends of which resulted in there being insufficient room on the breast for the normal ten loops, hence the number being reduced to eight. The shoulder-wings with white worsted edging were distinctions of the battalion flank companies (grenadiers and light infantry). With this uniform are worn the full-dress white breeches and black gaiters (white long gaiters were worn on dress parades, and grey overalls for ordinary service); and the single shoulder belt supporting the bayonet-scabbard, this belt being worn on its own for 'walking-out'. The rectangular brass belt-plate bore the design of a crowned Garter with 'GIIIR' in the centre. The fob at the right waist emphasizes the 'off-duty' aspect of Payne's uniform, such additions not being permitted on duty.

What makes the Payne portrait a most important document is the portrayal of the shako. Payne shows the false-fronted 1812-pattern 'Belgic' cap, with the green

cords and plume of the light company. The shako badges are most significant, as they would appear to be the only contemporary evidence of the insignia of the Guards light infantry, and suggest that previous reconstructions would appear to be incorrect.

The ordinary plate for the 1812 shako was a crowned 'rococo' shield bearing the royal cypher, but among many regimental patterns that of the 1st Guards bore an embossed star bearing the Garter encircling 'GR' in the centre. This plate was worn from the issue of the shako; but on 28 December 1814 it was ordered that light companies should adopt instead separate badges of a bugle-horn over the regimental number. As the number was not appropriate for Guards regiments, it has been presumed that they wore the bugle over the ordinary plate. Payne's portrait would appear to prove this erroneous, at least as far as the 1st Guards' light infantry was concerned; for Payne has the bugle over a 'cut-out' star, the whole design much superior in appearance to the rather clumsy arrangement of a bugle over the large plate.

The picture thus solves a minor mystery of military uniform; and allows a precise date to be ascribed to the picture, for the Belgic shako was replaced by the 'Regency' pattern from the end of December 1815.

### THE BIDDLE COLLECTION

Although William Payne's portrait dates from the period of Waterloo, his battalion was not present at the great battle; but John Biddle's was — and he left a quite remarkable and unique collection of relics and documents which illustrate the career and duties of that most valuable member of a regiment, the company colour-sergeant. We are grateful to Alan Harrison for permission to illustrate and describe this collection of material.

By amazing coincidence, John Biddle was also attested

*The reverse of John Biddle's colour-sergeant's sleeve badge, showing his hand-written name at the top.*



at Worcester, also by Thomas Carden the magistrate, and also became a light company man. He enlisted in the 2nd (Coldstream) Guards on 25 June 1806, but was not attested until 12 August, probably having been with the recruiting party until that date. By trade a labourer, he was born at Little Shelsley (or Chelsey), Worcestershire, on 24 June 1788 and baptised on 30 June. He enlisted at the age of 18 for seven years' service, and was described as 5ft. 8in. tall (5ft. 8¾in. at his discharge!), of fair complexion, with grey eyes and light hair. Like Payne he was illiterate, his 'signature' being a cross witnessed by the recruiting-sergeant, Joseph Olive. He learned to write — remarkably well — in the army; and was promoted to corporal (9 June 1809) and then to sergeant in the 2nd Bn. (24 December 1811).

John Biddle was obviously a most capable and trusted NCO, for he was appointed colour-sergeant (apparently responsible for company accounts) in the battalion light company — a most

responsible post, given that the light infantry frequently operated in advance of the battalion in 'open order', when individual initiative played a greater rôle than usual at the period.

At Waterloo he served as second-in-command of the company's 1st Section (out of four), which was under personal command of Capt. the Hon. Robert Moore (second son of the Earl of Mountcashel, 1793–1856). The fact that Biddle's company commander was only 18 years of age, and that the light company had only one other officer (Ensign Henry Gooch; the senior captain, William Lovelace Walton, served at Waterloo as acting-adjudant) must have put even greater responsibility upon Biddle.

Many of John Biddle's papers have survived, both personal and those of his company. Among these are his own attestation form, and testimonials from his officers ('From his general conduct I can with confidence recommend him as an honest trustworthy person...'), and order-books concerning the



**Above:**  
*Self-portrait of William Payne, 1st Foot Guards, 1814-15. (Courtesy John Hall)*

**Left:**  
*Possible recruiting favour preserved in the John Biddle collection.*

**Right:**  
*John Biddle's colour-sergeant's sleeve badge — light company, 2nd Bn., 2nd Foot Guards. 140mm by 78mm.*



**Left:**

Tentative reconstruction of the Payne uniform. Note green shako phone and cord; and particularly the badges — a separate bugle-horn above a star, the latter presumably enclosing the 1st Guards' device of a Garter encircling the royal cypher. From the naif self-portrait an oval rather than a circular Garter may tentatively be deduced. If the Biddle cut-out star badge illustrated elsewhere in this article is a light company shako badge, it would tend to confirm this, as well as the small size. The lacr decoration on the fringed shoulder wing is puzzling: although Payne painted bastion loops on the cuffs and breast with some care, he shows a simple zig-zag shape on the wings. We have guessed at bastion loops here, following all other known sources, but without complete confidence. (Bryan Foster).

daily duties of a company sergeant and those under his command; but perhaps the most interesting are the documents which relate to Waterloo, which are probably unique survivals of their type.

The company roll (too extensive to be reproduced here) lists each member and the date of his promotion, the section in which he served, and the equipment with which he had been issued. For example, Biddle himself carried 'firelock' no. 42, no bayonet (presumably a sword instead?) and had greatcoat no. 67. Private George Wild (whose Waterloo Medal is still in existence) carried firelock no. 28, bayonet no. 28 and greatcoat no. 1296. Drummer George Hinckley carried 'horn' no. 1 ('drummers' carried bugles in light companies) and greatcoat no. 329. Against Hinckley's name is the note 'Prisner — Return'd'.

Most fascinatingly, it is the Waterloo papers which illuminate the actions of the company, which was engaged throughout the battle in the most bitter fighting around Hougoumont, one of the great epics of the engagement. In this fighting Biddle himself was wounded, but not so severely as to disable him in the immediate aftermath of the battle; for he was apparently given the task of completing a roll of killed and wounded in the 2nd

Coldstream, doubtless compiled from the rolls of company-sergeants like himself.

The list, which still exists, was drafted onto a sheet of paper which bears the account for the washing of Sergt. Thomas Lloyd, Biddle's companion in the light company ('4 Shirts 10d, 2 Pairs of Stockings 3d...'). Biddle's own company ('Lt. Infantry') recorded three sergeants and 40 rank-and-file killed or wounded, and had nine men 'missing' (probably still in the Hougoumont woods when the roll was called). Biddle's estimate of the battalion casualties is calculated as 13

sergeants and 263 other ranks (in addition, one officer was killed and eight wounded). Of the wounded, some are noted as 'since Ded'.

Biddle was temporarily evacuated from his battalion, spending the period from 18 to 24 July at Haslar Hospital. Waterloo was his last active service, though many of his papers relate to the post-Waterloo period when he joined the 1st Battalion, including service in Ireland. After 21 years and 3 months service (including the two years' notional service which presence at Waterloo bestowed) he was discharged in consequence of 'length of service' (presumably three

seven-year enlistments) on 15 September 1825. He returned to Worcester as an Out-Pensioner of Chelsea Hospital with a pension of 1/10d. per diem, paid in

**Below:**

The first page of Biddle's nominal roll of casualties in his battalion at Waterloo, apparently compiled on the evening of the 18th or on the following day.

**Bottom:**

Company roll, light company, 2nd Bn., 2nd Foot Guards, Waterloo, 18 June 1815. Sgt. Biddle's notebook shows the name of each man, with columns recording — left to right — his 'firelock' number, bayonet number, greatcoat number, and fate during the battle of that day, if wounded or 'Killed'.

1	2	3	4	5
John Thomas	41	John Biddle	42	James
John Biddle	42	John Biddle	43	John Thomas
John Biddle	43	John Thomas	44	John Thomas
John Biddle	44	John Thomas	45	John Thomas
John Biddle	45	John Thomas	46	John Thomas
John Biddle	46	John Thomas	47	John Thomas
John Biddle	47	John Thomas	48	John Thomas
John Biddle	48	John Thomas	49	John Thomas
John Biddle	49	John Thomas	50	John Thomas
John Biddle	50	John Thomas	51	John Thomas
John Biddle	51	John Thomas	52	John Thomas
John Biddle	52	John Thomas	53	John Thomas
John Biddle	53	John Thomas	54	John Thomas
John Biddle	54	John Thomas	55	John Thomas
John Biddle	55	John Thomas	56	John Thomas
John Biddle	56	John Thomas	57	John Thomas
John Biddle	57	John Thomas	58	John Thomas
John Biddle	58	John Thomas	59	John Thomas
John Biddle	59	John Thomas	60	John Thomas
John Biddle	60	John Thomas	61	John Thomas
John Biddle	61	John Thomas	62	John Thomas
John Biddle	62	John Thomas	63	John Thomas
John Biddle	63	John Thomas	64	John Thomas
John Biddle	64	John Thomas	65	John Thomas
John Biddle	65	John Thomas	66	John Thomas
John Biddle	66	John Thomas	67	John Thomas
John Biddle	67	John Thomas	68	John Thomas
John Biddle	68	John Thomas	69	John Thomas
John Biddle	69	John Thomas	70	John Thomas
John Biddle	70	John Thomas	71	John Thomas
John Biddle	71	John Thomas	72	John Thomas
John Biddle	72	John Thomas	73	John Thomas
John Biddle	73	John Thomas	74	John Thomas
John Biddle	74	John Thomas	75	John Thomas
John Biddle	75	John Thomas	76	John Thomas
John Biddle	76	John Thomas	77	John Thomas
John Biddle	77	John Thomas	78	John Thomas
John Biddle	78	John Thomas	79	John Thomas
John Biddle	79	John Thomas	80	John Thomas
John Biddle	80	John Thomas	81	John Thomas
John Biddle	81	John Thomas	82	John Thomas
John Biddle	82	John Thomas	83	John Thomas
John Biddle	83	John Thomas	84	John Thomas
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# REVIEWS



The Coldstream Garter star badge, in brass, now on a cut-out scarlet cloth backing, measuring 47mm by 40mm; the sturdy rear attachment, and the Payne self-portrait, both suggest that it may be the lower of the light company shako badges, despite its small size.

quarterly instalments, a total annual payment of £31 15s. 8½d. (when deductions were reckoned).

Four other items are included in the Biddle collection: his Waterloo Medal, his colour-sergeant's badge, and two others. The sleeve badge of colour-sergeant was instituted in July 1813 as a reward of merit, worn on the right arm. It is conceivable that this is the only extant example of the unique design worn by the Coldstream: a representation of a crimson Colour bearing the regimental Garter star over a wreathed sphinx, with crown above and crossed swords below, in gold and silver embroidery. The badge was so highly regarded that it is mentioned on Biddle's regimental testimonial ('13 Years ... as a Serjeant in which Rank he obtained a Badge as a reward for his good conduct'), and it is even named on the reverse.

Another item is a brass Garter star badge with a scarlet cloth backing. Its use is uncertain, its large fitting on the reverse precluding its use on the uniform, but the badge being too small for use on the knapsack or cartridge-box. The rear fitting would be appropriate for a head-dress, but the badge would be too large to secure the cockade. Its possible use has been revealed by the Payne portrait: the badge below the bugle on the light company shako, perhaps?

The final item is more perplexing: a large six-armed star made of yellow, scarlet and dark blue ribbons attached to a blue pasteboard backing. It could well be that this is the only surviving example of the 'favours' worn by recruiting-parties, given to newly-enlisted men or worn to attract recruits. Could it be that Biddle preserved the 'favour' he was given when he enlisted, or one that he wore when he was himself on recruiting-duty? We shall never know; but taken together, the collection provides a possibly unique and historically most important insight into the life of one of Wellington's stalwarts.

MI

'British Commandos in Action' by Leroy Thompson, colour plates by Ken MacSwan, illustrated by Joe Sewell; Squadron Signal Publications, Combat Troops in Action No.8; 50pp, illus. throughout; 3pp col. illns.; £4.50

From the first glance it is clear to any reader with a reasonable knowledge of the subject that this work will not be breaking any new ground. This is a pity, because the wartime Commando Forces are one of the relatively few topics so far untouched in any detail by devotees of uniform and insignia (although recent articles by W.Y. Carman in 'M' have rectified this situation somewhat).

The text is a predictable, albeit reasonably accurate potted history of wartime units, and of training, weaponry, and the standards required. The first section of photos amply illustrate this phase (though a minor point emerges already — no man wearing a Commando flash can properly be described as a 'trainee').

The author then goes on to describe various Commando operations, listing 'orbats' for each campaign. Unfortunately, the second part of the photographic coverage is where the errors creep in. A clearly identifiable member of 2 Cdo. is described as 'thought to be a member of 30 Cdo.'; Army Commandos are identifiable as Royal Marines; two signallers captioned as 'members of 2 Cdo. Bde.' are clearly not Commandos at all; a member of 3 Cdo., clearly dated by his insignia as 1943/44, is captioned as c.1941... One could go on. The frequent use of weasel phrases such as 'thought to be' or 'believed to be' in captions betrays the author's basic unfamiliarity with the visual details of a subject on which he presumes to offer the public a book whose main appeal lies in photographs. This is all the more irritating, because the photos include some splendid illustrations of little-known and rarely-seen insignia — e.g. the swordfish flash of 101 Tp., 6 Cdo., and the insignia of the French element of 4 Cdo. at Dieppe, 1942 — of whose importance the author is clearly ignorant.

The choice of colour content is drab and uninspired, considering the great variety of clothing and equipment worn by these units in action; and the figures are not executed to a high standard of skill.

At £4.50, unless the prospective buyer simply has to have it for the sake of the photographs, this book is too expensive. It leaves the average military enthusiast little better enlightened on a fascinating subject which demands greater care. Sorry, Mr. Thompson; but you're out of your depth with this one.

BJH

'The Dragon's Teeth' by John Robert Young; Century Hutchinson; 224pp, 20 b/w ill., 111 col. ill., 6 maps, 7 charts, 37 line drawings; £16.95

John Robert Young is a skilled and imaginative photographer whose last book — on the French Foreign Legion — was widely praised. The present volume is his record, in words and pictures, of a journey 'Inside China's Armed Forces' in 1986 — a unique achievement for a Western photo-journalist, and a tribute to his persistence.

As China has become more open and the West has developed greater interest, 'The Dragon's Teeth' fits a unique slot; it is almost a military travel book. Though basic equipment diagrams and organisation charts are included at the back, the bulk of the book is John Robert Young's personal view. Visitors to China will recognise 'By now, I was becoming familiar with the arrival procedure at units I had been cleared to visit. Cold flannels, cold drinks — orange or beer — and consideration of my requirements.' The Chinese are hospitable and friendly, and keen to present a modern face to the world.

The book shows the efforts that the PLA are making to up-date their forces; and conversely, it may have been this desire to present a modern image which prevented the author from being given permission to cover a field training exercise, which might have presented an undesirable picture: there are fine photographs of men and vehicles in barracks, but none in the field. One senses, reading the book, that as the visit progressed the author experienced that growing frustration which gnaws at Westerners who see their plans frustrated by their hosts.

The reviewer is forced to add that, the spectacular cover apart, the author does not seem to have been particularly well-served by his publishers in the matter of design. The photographs are not used with the flair which made the Foreign Legion title so attractive. The text sits safely in a one-column layout with captions in the margin; there are only two double-page spreads in the book, and both of these are cluttered by text or inset pictures.

These reservations apart, the reviewer recommends 'The Dragon's Teeth' not only to the military enthusiast, but also to more generally Sinophile readers. The PLA has dominated Chinese life for over 40 years; and to fail to study it is to neglect a vital part of that nation's recent history. This book is a unique insight into a vast organisation, putting a human face on what history has always dismissed as a 'horde'. EWWF

## CARDS and PRINTS

**'L'Armée Française: Ses Uniformes, Son Armement et Son Equipment'** by Lucien Rousselot; available from Historex Agents, 3 Castle St., Dover, Kent CT16 1QJ; lists available on request.

Lucien Rousselot is 85 years old, and is accepted as the doyen of contemporary French military artists. He began his *magnum opus* under the above title in 1942; and produced 106 plates at intervals up to 1970. Six of the titles are of 18th century uniforms, two of post-Waterloo, pre-Franco-Prussian War subjects; the remainder are of the 1st Empire period, and have been universally accepted as the finest published work on French uniforms of this colourful era.

Rousselot still works, producing pen-and-ink, watercolour and oil paintings of soldiers; and to ensure that the scale and detail of his figures are absolutely accurate, he has produced a magnificent series of human and horse mannikins each with its own miniature wardrobe of headdress, uniforms, arms, equipment and horse furniture. The set includes cuirasses, helmets, swords, muskets and carbines in addition to all the paraphernalia of clothing, appointments and accessories. The artist's personal preference is for his models of horse furniture, and the articulated horses which he uses as lay figures for his cavalry groups. The information provided on his plates is consequently the definitive documentation on the subject.

The Napoleonic plate provided for review was 106: **Officers, NCOs and Trumpeters of the Artillery Train of the Guard, 1800-1815**. This colourful plate has four figures of officers, eight of NCOs and four of trumpeters. The combination of sky blue clothing, dark blue facings, red pipings and white or silver metal has an elegance which particularly lends itself to the style of the period. Rousselot uses a simple profile system, showing eight mounted figures with details of the horse furniture. With a French and English text, this is an excellent record of an unusual Napoleonic uniform; taking into account the amount of information given, it is not considered expensive at £4.80. A subscription to this series is available from Historex Agents, and offers a price of £4.20 per plate provided that two are bought at any one time.

**Plate 98: Guides of the Imperial Guard, 1854-1870** is one of the eight non-Napoleonic plates published under the 'Hussard de Marais' imprint, and has an excellent English text translated from the French by Andrew Cormack. There are nine full figures of NCOs and men, showing all details of the front and back of the uniforms including full dress, campaign kit, stable dress, and overcoat and cape, together with detailed drawings of the dolman, two types of headdress, the pouch, sahretache, bridle, saddlery

and shahraque. All the plates in the 'Hussard de Marais' group are priced at £6.75.

DSVF

**Le Cimier 'Ancien Régime'** series by Eugène Lelievre; five sets each of four plates, covering line regiments and the Maison du Roi, c.1730-60, two infantry and two cavalry plates per set; French & English text; available from Historex Agents at £15.75 per set. This series of colour plates, by one of France's greatest living military artists, measure 32cm x 24cm. Sent for review was set No.3, **French Infantry, 1750-60; Gendarmerie of France, 18th Century**. Plate 1 shows a grenadier and a fusilier of the Régt. of Béarn on campaign in North America; both wear full regimentals and carry packs, tent and poles, camp kettle and axes. Plate 2 shows an officer and a private of the Régt. La Sarre in what amounted to a summer campaign dress of red waistcoats, breeches and, in one case, Indian leggings. Plate 3 illustrates a kettle-drummer and a standard-bearer of the Gendarmerie Compagnie de Berry, both wearing cloaks and with drums and standard in waterproof covers; good black and white illustrations of the standards are shown on the text pages. Plate 4 provides an interesting back view of a Chevau-léger, and a Gendarmerie Dauphin.

All four plates are in M. Lelievre's familiar, very free water-colour technique, and are very nice indeed. They have much more feeling than Rousselot's uniform plates, but lack — alas — that master's mass of informative detail. They are ideal for modellers and for anyone else who has alternative sources of detail reference for such items as the construction of costume and saddlery, gunlocks, spurs, etc. The texts are good and informative.

GAE

**Le Hussard de Marais 'Costume Militaire'** series by Eugène Lelievre; 16 plates, with accompanying text and b/w sketches; available from Historex Agents at £6.75 each.

This series covers the French Army and Marine during the 'Ancien Régime', ranging from e.g. No.1, the Maison du Roi of Louis XIV, musketeers 1715-70; through No.3, Navy Guards and Galley Troops, 1670-1756, and No.9, The First Dragoons, 1640-1725; to No.16, Hussars 1770-89. Each is a large (48cm x 32cm) colour plate folded in half, with a similar plate of text and b/w sketches. Many uniforms and details are shown, very freely sketched in pen and simply coloured. All the drawings have M. Lelievre's lovely 'feel' for his subject; but they are so free that many details, e.g. cap and belt plates, sword hilts, and some uniform details are frequently lost and sometimes misleading. Once again, accurate back-up reference will be needed if the plates are to be really useful; which is a pity, since they sometimes illustrate little-known

and very interesting uniforms.

The plate sent for review, No.13 'Régiments Étrangers 1735-75', shows 18 different uniforms for officers and men of Italian, German, Irish, Scottish and Swiss regiments in French service; it includes examples of drummers, grenadiers, and soldiers in full marching order. Two different models of haversack are illustrated in three b/w sketches. It is the text which really disappoints. A rambling and extremely general account of the origins of foreign troops, it offers little to the serious student on the uniforms or the organisation of the regiments; there are no comments on the actual illustrations, and no sources listed. The sweeping simplifications are misleading, and there are some errors.

Nevertheless, at £6.75 I think the sketches are worth the price. GAE

**'Ceux Qui Bravaient L'Aigle'** by Patrice Courcelle, available from him at 94 rue de la Victoire, 1060 Bruxelles, Belgium; 200 Belgian francs each, plus 10% P&P in Europe, 25% airmail P&P elsewhere for Plate 13 and above — lower numbers different prices, mostly out of print; apply to artist for details.

This is a series of colour plates researched and illustrated — to A4 size, on card, with close-packed text on the reverse — by the Belgian historian and artist Patrice Courcelle, whose work may be familiar to readers of French and Belgian magazines. This is really good, handy reference to the appearance of the armies which fought Napoleon's France. Sent for review were: No.16, **British 92nd Highlanders**; No.17, **British Horse Guards (The Blues)**, other ranks 1813-15, and No.18, officers of the same; Nos.19 and 20, **Russian Line Infantry 1804-07**; No.21, **Austrian Artillery**, other ranks, 1798-1815; and, in collaboration with H.K. Weiss, No.22, **Prussian Corps de Lutzow, Infantry, 1813-15**.

These are excellent uniform plates in a bold style, reminiscent of the Funckens but more solidly researched. Most have about five figures, with details of coats, insignia, weapons and equipment, often showing back views, details of construction, etc. The drawings lack the fine, precise detail of Rousselot or Fosten plates; and sometimes the exact cut of a sleeve, the construction and shape of a boot or sword hilt is not well enough understood. This is not nit-picking; these plates are published as uniform reference, are well enough done to deserve serious attention, and are worthy of serious criticism; just a little more care would improve them vastly. It is of little use to paint the feathers of a Highland bonnet carefully, if the bonnet is of a bizarre shape.

This is, however, criticism of the 'fine polish'; the underlying craftsmanship is generally very good. The plates are packed with useful information based on solid sources, which are credited. The French text

accompanying each plate lists brief descriptions of uniform, equipment and insignia item by item, frequently with measurements. I heartily recommend this series, and will certainly collect them myself.

(My only hesitation was caused by the title, which translates roughly as 'Those Who Dared to Stand Up to the Eagle'... Sundry ancestors stirred grumpily in their graves. Some of us didn't do too badly against the blasted bird, you know...) GAE

**'Kipling's Soldiers'**, Set No.10; and 'French Foreign Legion', Set No.11; six postcards per set; Pompadour Gallery, Fairview Parade, Mawney Rd., Romford, Essex RM7 7HH; £2.25 per set, UK or BFPO P&P incl.

The latest two sets of postcards in this established series, featuring paintings by Bryan Fosten, reproduced to 14.8cm x 10.5cm. Set No.10 is a most attractive and original idea: reconstructions of typical soldiers in the situations suggested by Rudyard Kipling's famous 'Barrack Room Ballads' — a leaflet provided with the set gives the full texts of the relevant poems. Thus we see a private of the Royal Sussex Regt., c.1890, in walking-out dress, being turned away from a pub, to illustrate 'Tommy'; a corporal of the Queen's in a Burmese setting, 1887, for 'Mandalay'; a private of the 2nd Essex (Mtd. Inf. Camel Regt.), Sudan, 1885, looking thoughtfully at his fallen enemy to illustrate 'Fuzzy Wuzzy'; and so on. Originality is matched by skill of execution; highly recommended.

Set No.11 shows Legion uniforms of various periods from Mexico, 1863, to home parade dress of today. The figures are very nicely done, in the excellent backgrounds now established as a feature of this series.

MCW

### We have also received:

**'The Remote Garrison: The British Army in Australia 1788-1870'** by Peter Stanley (Kangaroo Press, 3 Whitehall Rd., Kenthurst, NSW 2156, Australia; no price marked), a most interesting 96pp study marred by amateurish coloured uniform plates.

**'Firepower, From Sling to Star Wars'** by Philip Warner (Grafton Books, £14.95), an overview of weapons use from ancient times, enlivened by interesting anecdotal accounts.

**'A Strange War'** by C.P. Mills (Alan Sutton, £12.95), memoirs of troops 'sitting out' the Great War in Far East garrisons.

**'The Militia Artillery 1852-1909'** by N.E.H. Litchfield, available from him at 18 Bakehouse Lane, Ockbrook, Derby DE7 3RH at £20.00 plus P&P £2.00 (UK), £3.00 (O'seas). 160pp large format, illus. throughout, including many fine uniform and insignia studies.

**Below:**

The US infantryman on the eve of the Spanish-American War: a transitional figure, his 1883 pattern five-button blue 'sack coat' and light blue trousers contrasting with the brown duck gaiters, khaki drab campaign hat, and dark blue Mills webbing belt with two rows of .30-40 cal. smokeless rounds for the Krag rifle. Note three-button cuff. The white gloves are an anomalous touch, added for the sake of the photographer. (National Archives)

**Centre:**

This angle shows the shape and 'sit' of the 1889 hat; and the company letter, Infantry symbol, regimental and personal numbers the canvas haversack, which was off-white or tan in colour. (National Archives)

**Right:**

The rear view shows an untypical knapsack, apparently in brown canvas with black stencils: this may be an experimental item, and was not common issue. The box-shaped black Merriam knapsack was normal issue; but in the field the horseshoe roll of shelter-half, grey blanket, and sometimes the white duck 'blanket bag' was the most common form of pack worn. Note canteen and mug. (National Archives)

# US Infantry Field Uniforms, 1898-1902

## (1) Enlisted Men

JOHN PHILLIP LANGELLIER

**H**istory seldom provides such a neatly-timed turning point as the major transition, both in its experience of active service and in its field uniforms, which carried the United States Infantry from the final years of the 19th century into the opening years of the 20th.

By the 1890s the Indian Wars were, for all practical purposes, over. Many one- and two-company posts scattered around the West disappeared as the Army consolidated its far-flung units in larger garrisons. For many units this was the first time that the companies of one regiment found themselves quartered together.

The 12th Infantry provides a typical example. After participating in campaigns against the Modoc, Bannock, Apache and Sioux over nearly 25 years, the whole regiment was assembled at Ft. Niobrara, Nebraska. It

consisted of two battalions each of four companies averaging less than 65 men each.

The US Government wasted little time declaring war on Spain after the USS Maine was blown up in Havana Harbour on 15 February 1898. The 12th Infantry, moved by 19 April to a mobilisation camp at Chickamauga Park, Georgia, was increased to three battalions by 'milking' — adding Companies I, K, L and M. They sailed for Cuba as part of 1st Bde., 2nd Div., V Corps on 14 June; landing on the southern coast, they



marched inland for Santiago. They saw action in a clash at Guascama on 25 June; and in the fierce battle for El Caney on 1 July, when they came up against European troops armed with repeating rifles for the first time. The 12th stormed a stone fort under heavy, if outnumbered Spanish fire. The regiment saw more heavy fighting at San Juan a few days later.

Less than a year later the 12th sailed for the Philippines, arriving on 14 April 1899, and seeing vigorous campaigning on Luzon and Samar. After two years at home they were shipped East again for a further hitch between 1904 and 1906.

During their seasoning by fire in Cuba and the Philippines the 12th Infantry, and their comrades of sister regiments, suffered not only from 100° temperatures, jungle rainstorms, fever, poor rations, Spanish riflemen and Moro blades. They also suffered under the severe problems encountered by the Quartermaster Department in its efforts to provide US soldiers with a suitable uniform for tropical campaigning.

## UNIFORMS

When war with Spain erupted the Infantry wore essentially the same uniforms authorised for the final campaigns against the Indians. The basic items were the dark blue wool five-button blouse or 'sack coat' and light blue kersey trousers. A soft drab-coloured campaign hat, square-toed black leather shoes and, by the late 1880s, dark brown canvas leggings completed the outfit. Accessories included a canteen and cup, a haversack, and sometimes a blanket bag or knapsack, with shelter-half and poles. The webbing belt held smokeless powder cartridges for the .30-40 Krag rifle adopted in 1892 in place of the old .45-70 Springfield 'Long Tom'; and its bayonet in a metal scabbard.

Rank was indicated by white chevrons, points down, on the blouse sleeves. Sergeants had inch-wide



white stripes down the outer trouser seams; corporals, and lance-corporals holding renewed appointments had half-inch stripes. If the blouse was removed the blue pullover shirt could be worn in its place, but without chevrons.

In cold weather a light blue heavy wool overcoat was worn; this was lined and had a detachable cape. Where applicable, dark blue chevrons with white stitching were worn below the elbow, so as not to be obscured by the cape. The darker colour had been adopted at an earlier period when chevrons had been in the light blue arm-of-service colour then used by the Infantry, which did not show up against the overcoat colour. In garrison the overcoat was usually worn with the 1895 forage cap of 'peaked pillbox' shape, although in the field a

muskrat cap or other more functional headgear could be adopted.

The first important innovation to be authorised following the outbreak of war with Spain was a lightweight serge jacket in khaki, approved by the Quartermaster on 9 May 1898 for wear by officers; this will be illustrated and described in Part 2, which will cover officers' uniforms. Laudable as this reform may have been, the Quartermaster Department ran into considerable difficulty when it decided to issue khaki to the rank and file as well.

Since no quantities of this cloth were available in the United States, it was decided to substitute a facsimile in canvas twill or plain duck dyed to a tan brown colour. But by requiring that the cuffs, collar, shoulder straps and external flaps of the

On campaign the blue woollen pullover shirt was often worn, with light blue, tan canvas, or khaki cotton trousers, in place of a blouse or jacket. It had a three-button front and two breast pockets with single button-through flapless fastening. The marksmanship award (right) is unofficial wear with this uniform. (Presidio Army Museum, San Francisco)

patch breast pockets be faced with the arm-of-service colour, the cost of manufacture was increased; and jackets made for one branch could not be pressed into service by another, thus compounding the supply problems.

On 15 July 1898 the Secretary of War approved modification of the original concept to provide coloured shoulder straps only, in light blue for Infantry, scarlet for Artillery, yellow for Cavalry, etc.; and specified that these should be made as separate attachments to facilitate production and dis-

tribution of enlisted men's uniforms<sup>(1)</sup>. Even so, many troops went to Cuba without their new khaki. Not until the major fighting had ended did distribution take place on a widespread basis; but by the time the forces went on to Puerto Rico and the Philippines stocks had increased sufficiently to allow for more general issue<sup>(2)</sup>.

Following a concession allowing officers to wear their shoulder straps of rank on the blue shirt, on 14 September 1899 the Adjutant General's Office issued General Order No.168 allowing NCOs to sew their chevrons directly on to their shirts, as well as their blouses and jackets.

Another practical innovation concerned the field hat. The campaign hat adopted in 1889 was ventilated only by a punched 'snowflake' pattern

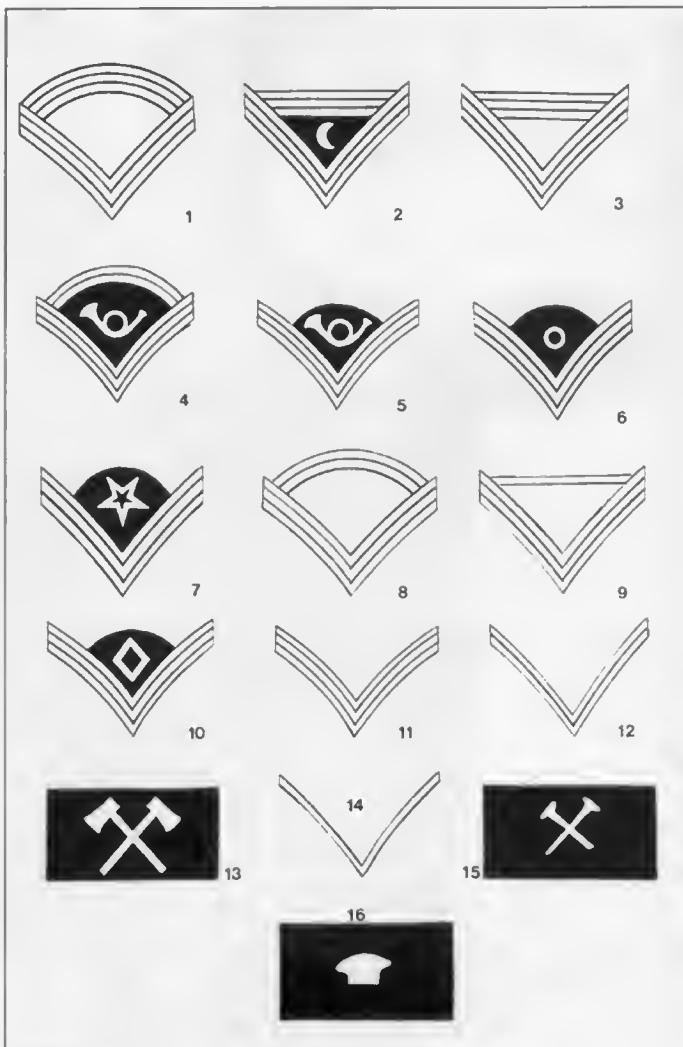


#### Above:

*Cloth chevrons with black chain stitching on white for the blue blouse, and white chain stitching on dark blue for the overcoat: (1) Sergeant Major (from 1899, Regimental Sgt. Maj.). (2) Quartermaster Sergeant (from 1899, Regt. QM Sgt.). (3) Regimental Commissary Sergeant (adopted 1899). (4) Chief Musician (adopted 1899). (5) Principal Musician. (6) Regimental Color Sergeant. (7) Rgt. Col. Sgt. (as revised 1901). (8) Battalion Sergeant Major (adopted 1899). (9) Company Sergeant Major (adopted 1898). (10) First Sergeant. (11) Sergeant. (12) Corporal. (13) Pioneer (discontinued 1899). (14) Lance Corporal (adopted 1891). (15) Artificer (adopted 1899). (16) Cook (adopted 1898). Khaki versions of each of these insignia were also prescribed after the adoption of khaki for field uniforms in 1898.*

#### Left:

*This sergeant wears the 1895 forage cap with the light blue overcoat. The detachable cape (fastened when appropriate by 12 small brass buttons bearing an eagle motif) had a dark blue lining. The dark blue chevrons with white chain-stitched detail dated from 1877. Note one-inch sergeant's trouser stripes. (National Archives)*



and had gradually gained wider distribution thereafter. Some troops found them uncomfortable, and too lightly constructed to stand up to campaign use.

During 1899 the Chief Quartermaster in Manila obtained 100,000 suits of khaki made from material ordered from Manchester, England; this proved superior to the cloth obtained in the USA at the outbreak of war. The same officer also suggested that all facings be eliminated from the field uniform, since they provided 'too conspicuous a mark' when fighting against a guerrilla enemy in jungle terrain, negating the advantage of smokeless powder cartridges. Higher authority ignored this advice. On 14 September 1899 General Order No.168 changed the infantryman's shoulder straps, the last facings on the khaki jacket, to white, in order to coincide with the trim for chevrons, officers' shoulder straps, and the like. Presumably hat cords were also changed to complete this rationalisation of the arm-of-service colours.

December 1899 saw a slight alteration of the khaki jacket for enlisted men when Specification No.493 from the Quartermaster Department determined that a 'rolling' collar should in future replace the standing collar of the jacket as first issued. Subsequently, Specification No.551 of 28 August 1901 added a 'V' at the neck gorge to end at the breast pocket, and specified a simple seam at centre rear in place of the pleat which had figured in earlier designs.

In addition to changes in cut, the Army ran tests to determine the best material they could obtain for field and combat conditions, these

(1) General Orders No. 51, Adjutant General's Office, 23 May 1898 provides the first inference that enlisted men would have khaki jackets when it mentions the colour of these facings. The Secretary of War's approval of detachable straps and the discontinuance of all other facings, and the publication of this pronouncement in General Order No.112, AGO, 6 August 1898 underscored the fact that the enlisted man was to have the khaki pattern similar to that of his officers.

(2) Some 5,000 khaki uniforms were available before V Corps sailed for Cuba. Some 80,000 had arrived by the end of August.

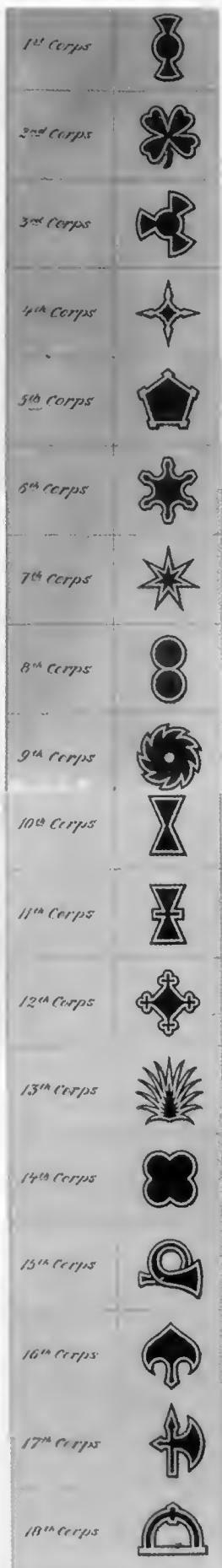
**Below:**

Infantry private in khaki field uniform typical of the 1898-99 period, photographed in the Philippines. Note standing jacket collar; and pointed, buttoned flaps on all four pockets. (Presidio Army Museum, San Francisco)



**Left:**

The 1899 campaign hat re-adopted the brass screen ventilators on each side of the crown, to a larger size than those fitted to hats prior to 1889. The colour of the felt hat was a drab khaki-brown, which has been described as the colour of 'wet beach sand, or a dunked cookie'. (Arizona Historical Society). (Centre) The 1880 pattern cork helmet, modelled roughly on British examples, was issued for hot climates; one of the few items of US uniform issue actually suitable for tropical campaigns, it was unpopular with the troops. (Bottom) The 1889 pattern helmet had a longer rear brim. Originally made with a white drill cloth covering, it appeared in khaki towards the end of the 1890s. (Wyoming State Museum)



The khaki cotton trousers, introduced for officers by the order of 9 May 1898 and subsequently issued to enlisted men, differed in cut from the old light blue kersey type. They had belt-loops; and leg stripes were not applied for officers and NCOs. (National Archives)

**Right:**

On 15 July 1898 the display of corps badges was ordered, normally on the campaign hat front. The headquarters (corps) troops of each were to wear the cloth badges in red, outlined white, outlined blue, as here. Troops of each corps' 1st

Div. wore solid red, the 2nd Div. solid white, and the 3rd Div. solid blue; the corps cavalry division were solid yellow badges. This diagram shows details from the chart illustrating GO 99, AGO, 1898. (National Archives)



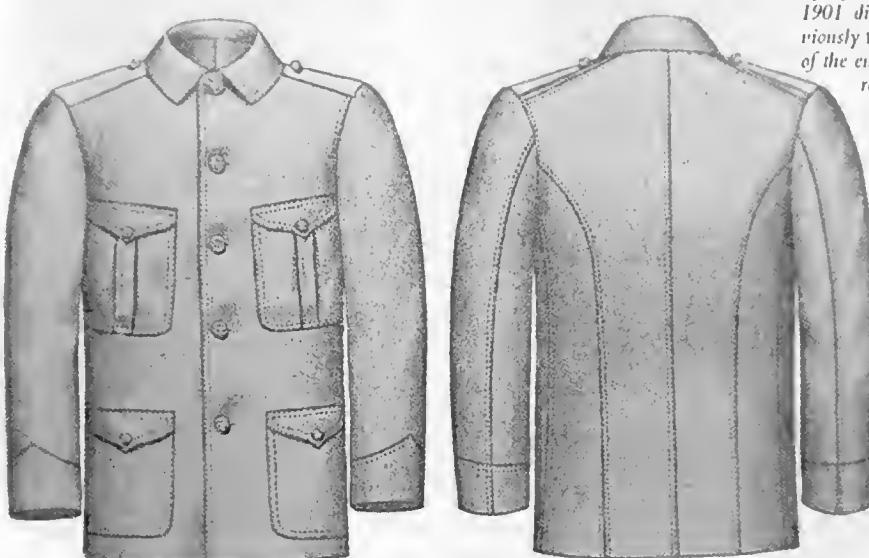
The 'rolling' or fall collar was introduced for the enlisted men's khaki jacket by specifications of late December 1899. Both the campaign hat and 1889 helmet are visible on the wall of this barrack room. Note particularly the

'shoulder strap'-type tabs on the sergeant's cuffs (left), demonstrating that he is an officer candidate; and the metal VII Corps badge worn on his left collar, a semi-official practice. The sergeant's hanging (best?) jacket

appears to have the detachable light blue shoulder straps, as does that worn by the corporal; the jacket worn by the sergeant seems to have attached khaki straps. (Presidio Army Museum, San Francisco)

#### **Below:**

Specification No.551 of 28 August 1901 discontinued the pleat previously tailored into the centre rear of the enlisted man's khaki jacket, replacing it with a simple seam. Note also the falling collar. (National Archives).



tests including consideration of other colours. General Order No.132 of 31 December 1902 prescribed olive drab wool for the winter service dress uniform, and khaki for summer or tropical wear, blue now being retained only for full dress. The experience of the Spanish-American War had broken many traditions; and along with the new self-image of the United States and its Army, blooded overseas for the first time, came the new cut and colour of the uniforms which America's soldiers would wear as history moved them towards the trenches of World War I. **MI**

**To be continued:** Part 2 will describe and illustrate officers' uniforms.

# Sgt. Rice's Kitbag

MARTIN WINDROW

At a recent Wallis & Wallis auction we were sufficiently attracted by one lot to allow a Belgian dealer to push us well beyond what we had intended to pay for what was, on the face of it, a fairly unglamorous cardboard box full of Second World War militaria. On reflection, we are glad that we decided to fight him for it.

The lot was unusual, and valuable to us, in being entirely associated with a single, named British NCO. His original white kitbag contained several items of the uniform, small kit and documentation of 2387476 Sgt. Frederick Charles Rice, Royal Signals. Since it appears that this collection came not directly from a bereaved family, but through a dealer, it was a particular stroke of luck to have found it still together.

The lot comprised the kitbag; a Cap, GS, with plastic wartime badge; a 1942-dated Battledress blouse with Royal Signals printed titles, 3rd Division patches, blue-and-white Royal Signals branch of service stripes, and badges of rank; a pair of 1940 pattern BD trousers; a khaki flannel shirt, with collar, and miniature white ranking on the right sleeve; two pairs of issue braces; a 'housewife', with all contents; a cap comforter; and documents including Sgt. Rice's 'paybook' (AB.64), with a

full record of many aspects of his service, his Soldier's Release Book (AB.X801), his Certificate of Transfer to the reserve (AF.X202/B), and a number of personal papers. Finally, and rather poignantly, there was a pocket New Testament with notes on the flyleaf suggesting that it had been carried by one Geoffrey Rice in 1917; a rusty paperclip marked Matthew, Chapter 6 — the Sermon on the Mount.

## One man's service

From these documents we can tell quite a lot about one British soldier who happened to get caught up in the greatest amphibious invasion in the history of warfare.

Frederick Charles Rice was an insurance clerk, from the South London suburb of Croydon. He was born on 9 April 1905; one letter, from the Yorkshire Insurance Co. dated 10 June 1921, confirms his employment as a 16-year-old junior clerk at a salary of £65 per year. By the time Hitler's war caught up with him, Fred Rice was only a fortnight short of his 37th birthday, and married to Mary Louisa; they had a house in Tollers Lane, Old

Coulsdon, only a couple of miles from where his mother still lived in Croydon. When the Army took him in March 1942, Fred was 5ft. 8in. tall, weighed 155lb., and had a chest measurement of 38½in. — no giant, but typical of his class and time. He had blue eyes, brown hair — and some extremely odd gaps in his army 'paybook'.

Since they can never be explained, there is no point in taking up space in speculation. Briefly, there are odd erasures of an atypical prefix to his Army number, and of details of his parents and birthplace, these being initialled by an officer. There is an almost total lack of information which one would expect to find about basic training. Fred Rice was promoted extremely rapidly for a 37-year-old conscript. An acting unpaid lance-corporal with Guards Armoured Division Signals in mid-September 1942, he was a corporal, attending 3 Intelligence School, on 12 December; a sergeant six weeks later; and serving with 61st Division Signals by March 1943. (This was a 'holding' formation which never left the UK.)

On 2 June 1944 Sgt. Rice embarked in the UK on HMS *Bulolo*, one of three converted merchantmen used as amphibious warfare command ships off the Normandy coast during the

D-Day landings. A mess chit shows that he drew his chocolate and cigarette rations on *Bulolo* until the week ending 9 July 1944. This ship had a mixed services complement; and on Fred Rice's release form X202/A his trade is listed as 'cipher operator HG'.

At some time after 9 July he must have come ashore in France, and his paybook records the award of the France and Germany Star. Long after the end of hostilities, in November 1945, his paybook seems to have been handed in for registration of his details to 3rd Division Signals, presumably on his arrival with the 'Iron Division'. Where was he between March 1943 and November 1945? Almost certainly, doing secret enemy signals intercept work with some unit which came directly under British 2nd Army or 21st Army Group.

If he was merely a humble translator he would have served with Intelligence Corps. Rice clearly had unusual skills: perhaps an unusual family background? Those blacked-out lines in his AB.64, obscuring the innocent entries of 'Croydon, Surrey' and 'British', initialled by a captain — they represent a nagging puzzle. Yet the few family papers seem to rule out a naturalised British subject being given a cover identity

## Below:

1937 webbing continued in use well into the 1950s, and is often sold in a variety of shades. New Second World War issue should be of unblanched mustard shade, and 1939-45 date stamps will increase the value to collectors.



## Left:

The 28 October 1938 specification E/1037 for Battledress stated that 'Each garment shall be fitted ... with a stitched-on calico or linen label (if of calico the edges shall be turned in) giving the broad arrow, name of the article, the size, particulars of measurements, the name of the contractor and the month and year of delivery.' The labels, inside the left breast of BD blouses, often varied slightly in the exact wording — 'BLOUSE' or 'BLOUSES'; 'SERGE' or 'SERGE SD' before the '1940 Pattern' — and there were a vast number of makers' names. A month and year date stamp was very often applied in violet ink; and the size was normally repeated in the same violet stamping on the drill material of the pocket below the label.



when venturing close to the danger of capture — which these oddities in his paybook might at first suggest.

Whatever the answer, his release papers, signed by the lieutenant-colonel commanding 3rd Division Signals in February 1946, carry his commanding officer's testimonial to Sgt. Rice's contribution to the war effort. His conduct is described as 'exemplary'; he is 'absolutely reliable ... has a thorough knowledge of his work ... his technical knowledge is without fault ... his speed and efficiency in operating the secret equipment ... is of the highest order ... He has a quiet and very pleasant manner but ... an air of authority...'

On 27 March 1946 — remarkably early for a 1942 conscript, and at a period

when his division was earmarked to sail to Palestine — Sgt. Rice took 56 days' release leave and 13 days' overseas leave; and on 4 June 1946 his country dispensed with his services. He took his campaign medal and his glowing testimonials; and went quietly back to his modest, useful life. It seems to us that he was not a negligible man.

#### SITREP FOR COLLECTORS

British Battledress of Second World War date has never commanded the interest, or the prices, of more glamorous types of militaria in this country. But over the past ten years Continental dealers, who have had a ready market for the uniforms of the Allies who liberated their countries, have been buying

steadily, even aggressively. The point will very shortly be reached when 1940 pattern Battledress becomes hard to find, and prices are going to increase.

A clean, unbadged blouse can still be bought for between £15 and £25; but several dealers are now 'down to their last bale, but don't know where the next is coming from'. Collectors are familiar with the sight of spuriously badged blouses for rather fancy prices, and understandably despise all those Commando colonels' and Para sergeant-major's blouses adorned (usually by Mum in the back room) with suspiciously new and mismatched insignia. It might be worth considering them soon, and cutting off the rubbish for possible later replacement. Blouses bearing genuinely contemporary sets of insignia, like Sgt. Rice's, are very well worth buying without delay.

The 1940 pattern BD trousers, always rarer than blouses, are now quite scarce, and command up to £30. (Rarities such as the Airborne pattern are almost impossible to find, and fetch £100 or over. If offered a pair, look very closely at the outside of the left thigh: excellent fakes are being made by removing the map pocket from 1949 trousers, and adding the chamois-lined Airborne front pocket.)

Most items of 1937 webbing equipment can still be found at from £2 to £10, with dated Second World War examples at the upper end of that range. Gasmasks fetch about £15, as do helmets. The haversack or 'small pack' tends to be rarer, and pricier — tens of thousands were sold surplus and used to destruction by civilian labourers, hikers and fishermen. (The same is true, of course, of Battledress itself, and the even rarer denim version.)

Does all this sound like very small beer? Well, consider: six or eight years ago a First World War SD tunic could be bought for £40 maximum, by those very

**Opposite:** Items from Sgt. Rice's kitbag, with other contemporary pieces of uniform and small kit, including the BD blouse of a lieutenant, Pioneer Corps, British Forces in France, 1945; and that of a sergeant of Royal Artillery with VIII Corps, Normandy, 1944.

few collectors who bothered to hunt them down. Now they command up to £150, and the trousers £150 plus — when you can find them. A basic webbing set could be had for about £30; now it costs £130, condition immaterial — and the helve-holder for the bayonet scabbard and entrenching tool handle goes for £80 or more. First World War boots are simply unobtainable, and cost whatever the owner wants to charge a collector frantic to complete a uniform. Today, dated Second World War boots cost about £30; but in a few years' time...? First World War helmets could be had, only a few years ago, for about £15 — the same as a Second World War helmet today. The 1916-18 helmet fetches anything from £50 to £80 now, even in unattractive condition.

Enthusiasms go in cycles. Not long ago First World War kit commanded no interest; now, with good published reference sources coming on to the market, it is gold-dust. The once-plentiful 1939-45 militaria will inevitably become scarcer; and collectors will wake up to the fact that it is increasingly hard to assemble for reasonable prices. Named collections like Sgt. Rice's kitbag will become sought-after rarities.

Personally, while flattered by the interest of our French and Belgian friends, we believe that British collectors should take warning. Grandad's BD may not be a Holbein or a Turner; but it still deserves to stay in the country he defended during the greatest war in history.

MJ

#### Acknowledgements:

Thanks to Charlie Bodycomb, Mike Chappell, Jim Dowdall, Paul Hannan and Anthony Preston for their time and advice.



## Maqoma

IAN KNIGHT  
Painting by ANGUS McBRIDE

Some time during the 1750's, the first white men pushing out the fringes of South Africa's Cape Colony encountered bands of semi-nomadic Xhosa tribesmen; and the subsequent contest for the grazing lands between the Fish and Kei Rivers was to lead to no fewer than nine wars between 1799 and 1878. Whatever the rights and wrongs of each individual conflict, it was the Xhosa who ultimately lost their lands and their independence. These 'Kaffir' or 'Cape Frontier Wars' made and broke the reputations of many individuals on both sides; but among the Xhosa one man in particular stands out as a daring and able military leader and an implacable opponent of white expansion: Chief Maqoma.

Maqoma was born in about 1798, the eldest son of Ngqika, chief of a powerful section of the Xhosa living to the west of their tribal range on the verges of the Fish River, which the Colony had arbitrarily designated as its border. Although linguistically and culturally similar to their northern cousins the Zulus, the Xhosa lacked as centralised a form of government. Ngqika was involved in a succession dispute which unsettled the frontier district, and led directly to the first conflicts with the whites.

Maqoma himself was too young to take part in these early campaigns; but in 1818 he played a prominent rôle in the battle of AmaLinde,

where Ngqika fought to overthrow one of his Xhosa rivals. Ngqika was defeated; but his son led attack after attack on the enemy until he was wounded and carried from the field. This established Maqoma's reputation as a ferocious warrior, and brought him considerable influence despite the fact that he was not technically Ngqika's heir.

Maqoma's territory was in the foothills of the Amathole Mountains, a warren of impenetrable ravines and ridges east of the Fish River. In 1820 the British, seeking to establish a neutral zone along the frontier, informed Ngqika of their intention to clear the land beyond the Fish; and among those to be

expelled was Maqoma. Although allowed to return for short periods, Maqoma was deeply embittered by this unexpected and unwarranted treatment; and for the rest of his life he was driven by a yearning for his lost lands. He expressed his discontent by raiding the colonists' cattle herds; and throughout the 1820s tension mounted on the frontier. In 1829 Ngqika died, and since his heir Sandile was a minor Maqoma became regent. In December 1834 war broke out: the Xhosa swept into Cape Colony.

### THE SIXTH FRONTIER WAR

In many respects this Sixth Frontier War was Maqoma's. He was responsible for much of the Xhosa strategy, and he personally led raids deep into British territory. The Xhosa did not have a large, organised army like that of the Zulus; but they were quick to appreciate the value of firearms, and to adapt their tactics accordingly. They grew skilled at



A rare early photograph of Maqoma and his wives, presumably taken during the 1850s when he was at the height of his reputation. Everyday wear for Xhosa men consisted of little more than the blanket shown here. (Cape Archives)

ambushing British baggage wagons in the bush; and they perfected a technique of luring small parties away from the main bodies of troops, cutting them off in thick bush and destroying them in detail.

Although Maqoma's reputation in the eyes of his enemies was probably exaggerated, and other Xhosa chiefs should take credit for some of the feats and innovations attributed to him, there can be little doubt of his daring and tactical flair. When at last the Xhosa were forced on to the defensive he retreated into the fastness of the Amathole; and was finally brought to submission by a war of attrition in 1835.

He took his defeat badly. His banishment from his lands now confirmed, he took to drinking large quantities of brandy at the army canteen at Fort Beaufort; and did not take the field during the short Seventh Frontier War or 'War of the Axe' in 1846. Sir Harry Smith, the eccentric and flamboyant Governor of the Cape, considered that Maqoma had been reduced to nothing but 'a drunken beast'; and on one occasion publicly humiliated him by making him kneel, and placing his foot upon his neck. It was a gratuitous insult, for which Maqoma would take a bloody revenge.

### THE LAST CAMPAIGN

In the long and bitter Eighth Frontier War of 1850-53, Maqoma struck out from his stronghold in the Amathole foothills — which he reoccupied as soon as hostilities broke out — at British columns and isolated forts. His personal bravery was an inspiration; on one occasion he was seen to ride from the cover of the bush, dismount, and calmly give instructions to his warriors while well within British musket range.

At last, however, the Xhosa were defeated by weight of numbers and modern weapons: their witchdoctor's charms against bullets were no match for the



A contemporary painting of Maqoma leading his warriors into action against a British wagon train. In some representations he is shown with a short, close-trimmed beard and moustache. Here the artist features the characteristic costume of a Xhosa chief — a headdress with two crane feathers, and a leopard-skin cloak worn as in our painting — but has coyly given Maqoma an anachronistic Zulu-style loin covering. Note that he carries a round-headed carved wooden club as well as a short spear. (Transvaal Archives Depot)

British regulars and their local cavalry. Xhosa grief was manifested in national suicide. A girl claimed to have had visions in which long-dead Xhosa heroes promised to return from the grave and sweep the white men into the sea. In order to bring this about, a great sacrifice was needed; and believers were instructed to kill their cattle. Maqoma, resisting the whites to the end, threw his influence behind the movement. As the cattle were slaughtered, so the Xhosa starved in their thousands — and the dead chiefs did not rise up from their graves.

Maqoma was arrested for his part in the affair, and exiled to Robben Island off Cape Town — even then, a name with grim resonances. In 1869 he was permitted to return; but, though his power was broken, his spirit was not, and he continued to agitate until banished to the

island once more. He died there in 1873, and was buried in an unmarked grave.

\* \* \*

Maqoma's character was not without flaws: he was a child of his time and his race. He could be quarrelsome, was rumoured to beat his wives in fits of rage, and was certainly jealous of his nephew Sandile when he had to relinquish his regency on the latter's majority. At times he verged on alcoholism — an addiction cynically encouraged by a daily brandy allowance from the Colony, in the belief that it would keep him quiet.

For all that, Maqoma was the greatest Xhosa war-leader of the century. The British in general liked and admired him, though his stocky frame did not fit the romantic rôle of 'noble savage' in which many cast him. According to one officer who met him in peacetime, he was 'a gallant,

bold fellow, and as a friend a most excellent one; but as an enemy a very dangerous one'.

There is a curious postscript to his life. In July 1978, at the request of the Government of Ciskei, the Xhosa Homeland, a blind, disabled, albino seer named Charity Sonandi was given permission to try to locate Chief Maqoma's resting place on Robben Island. She identified an unmarked grave as Maqoma's; and, when it was opened, the skeleton was found to bear the marks of wounds corresponding to those which the chief is known to have suffered. The remains were taken by South African frigate to Ciskei, and re-interred not far from Maqoma's old lands in the Amathole. If nothing else, the ceremony underlined the respect in which Maqoma is still held by the people for whom he fought all his life.

MI

**Angus McBride's reconstruction on the rear cover shows Maqoma riding into battle during the Sixth Frontier War, 1835. There are a number of contemporary portraits which show him in both Xhosa and European dress. We reconstruct here the regalia of a Xhosa chief. Most Xhosa fought either naked, or wrapped round with a hide cloak; this was worn with the hair inside, and the outside stained with red ochre, which was also rubbed into the body. Chief's cloaks were of leopard-skin. Ornaments consisted of beaded work, and brass arm bangles — a mark of status. Unlike the Zulus the Xhosa did not wear elaborate headdress, although some young warriors wore a bunch of wing feathers on either side of the head, and senior men — as here — wore one or two crane feathers.**

The Xhosa appreciated the value of the horse, and traded or stole large numbers from the whites, although not in sufficient quantities to form a separate 'cavalry arm'. Cowhide shields were used in early tribal conflicts, but were soon abandoned as useless in bush warfare against troops armed with guns. Maqoma is shown carrying a throwing-spear, which remained the most effective Xhosa weapon in view of the difficulty of their obtaining firearms of good quality in sufficient numbers, or a reliable supply of ammunition.

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- Note:** Michael Barthorp's article on Mounted Infantry in this issue of 'MI' includes a colour illustration of a British soldier of the Sixth Frontier War by Pierre Turner. The same author's *The British Army on Campaign 1816-1902(1): 1816-53*, Osprey Men-at-Arms 193, lists British units committed against the Xhosa in the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Frontier Wars.

**Maqoma**  
**1835**

